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AMIGA FORMAT Arcade Issue 40

The Chaos Engine

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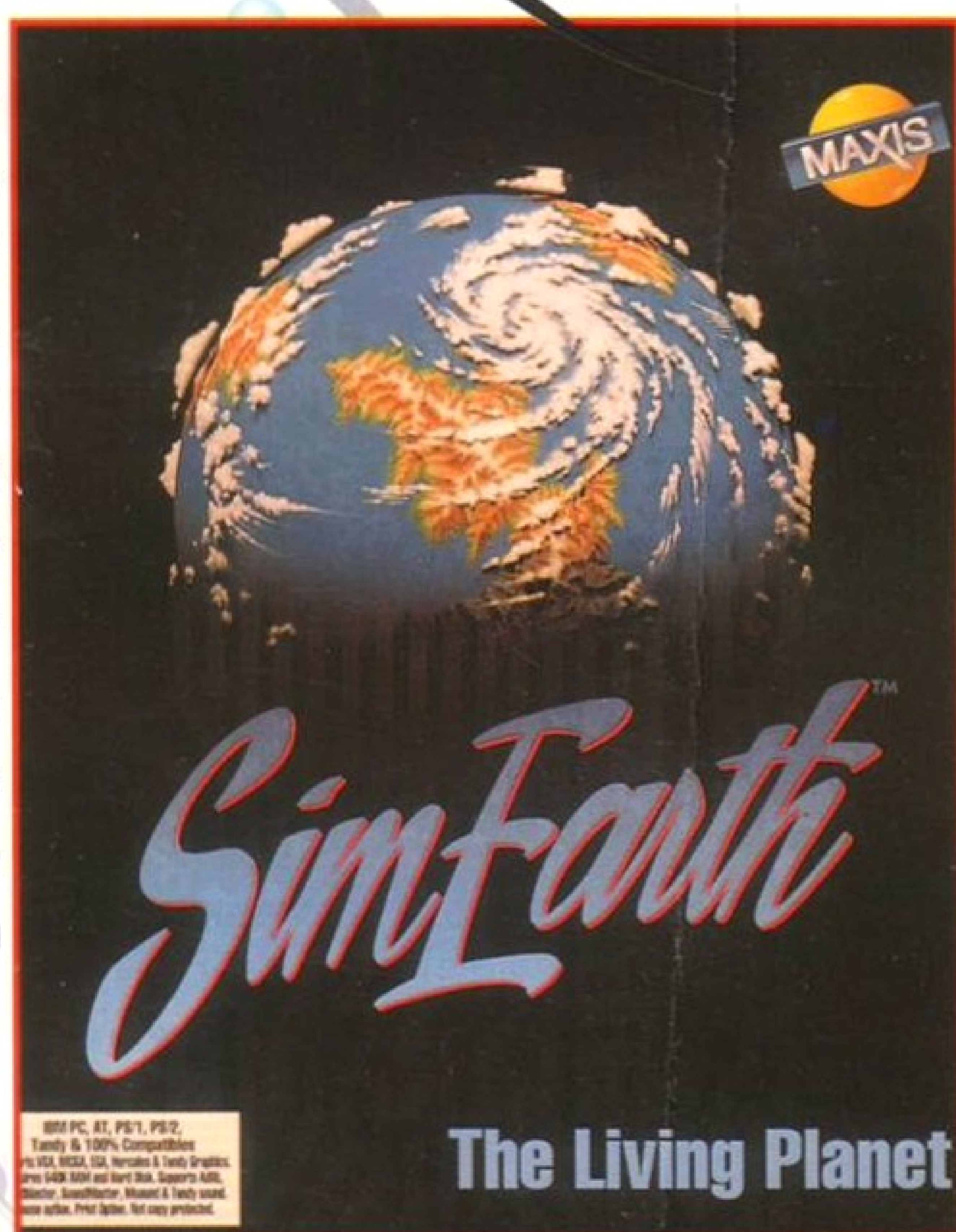


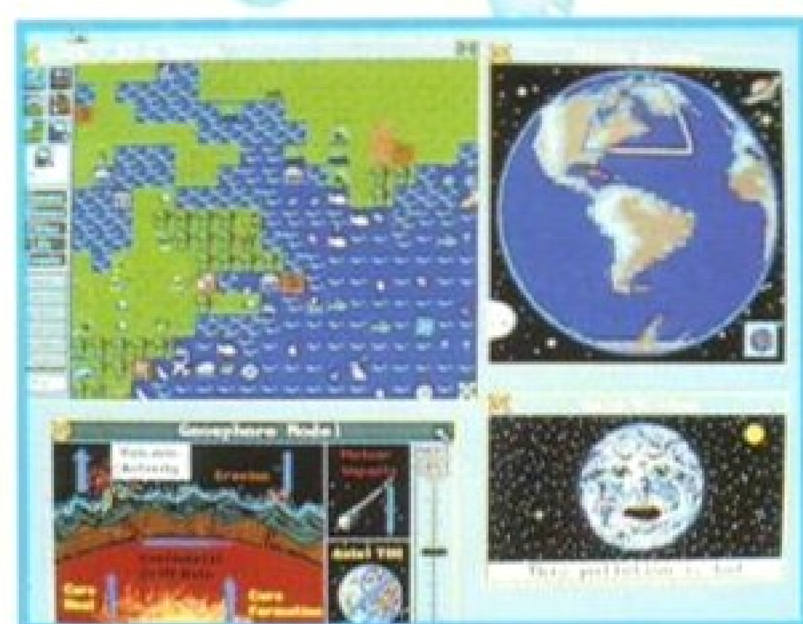
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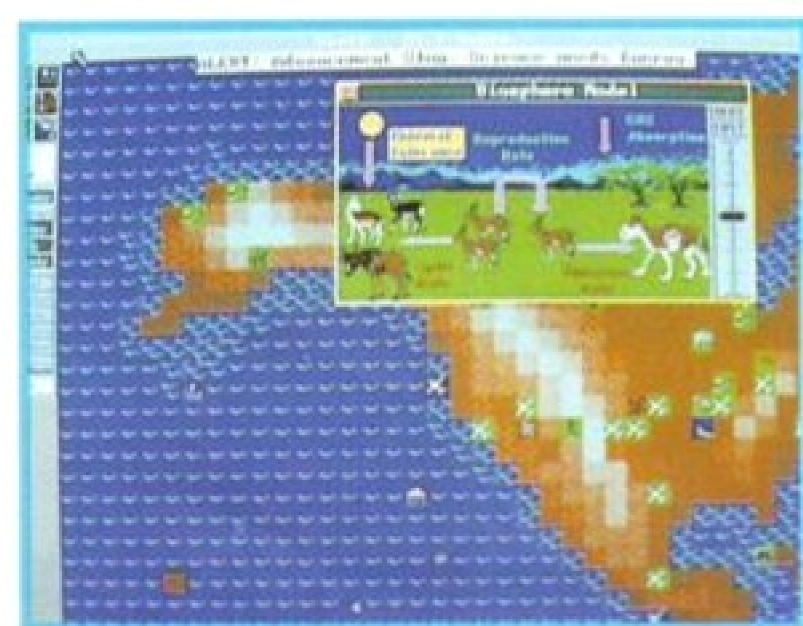
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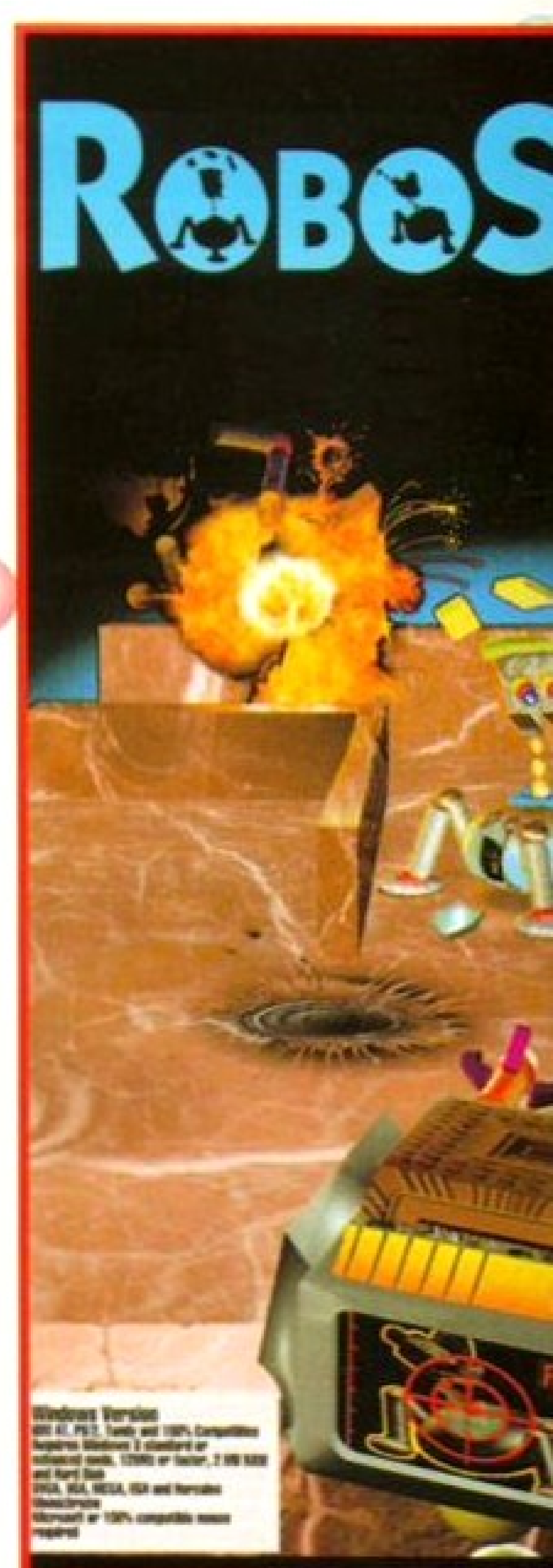
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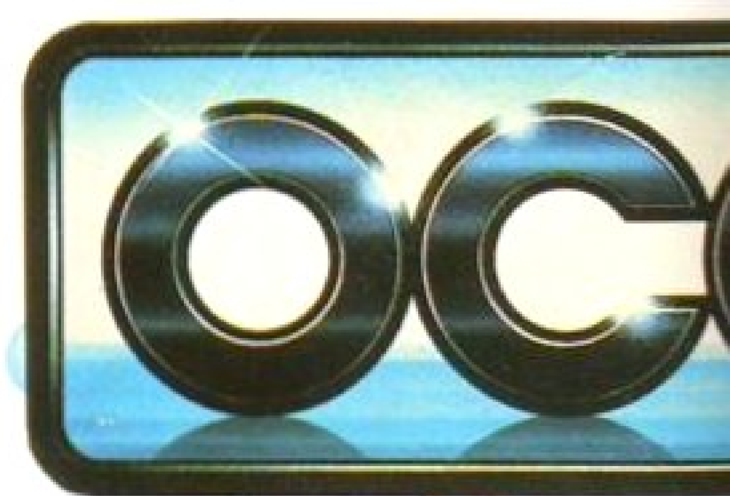
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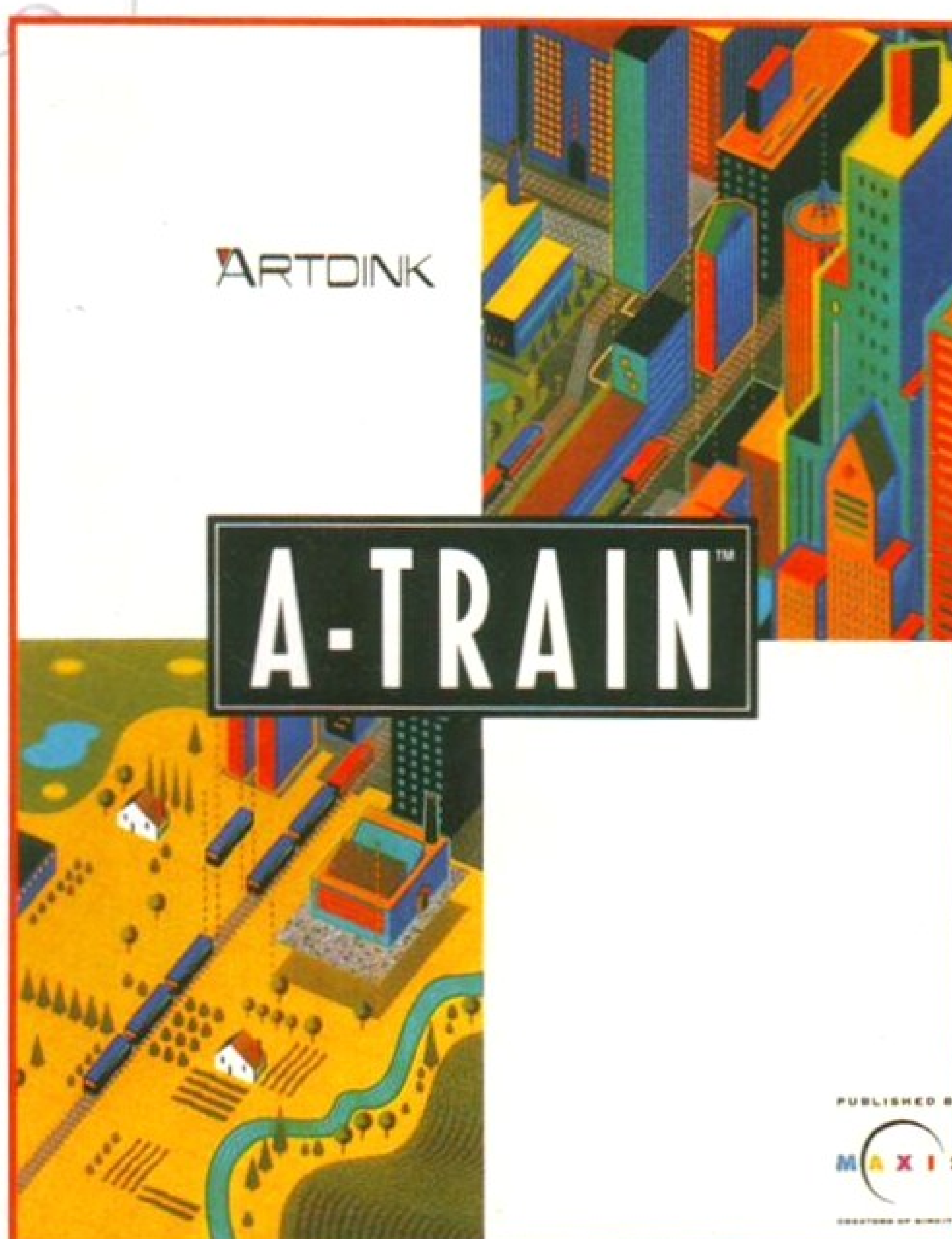
Armed with bombs, bullets, missiles, grenades and m
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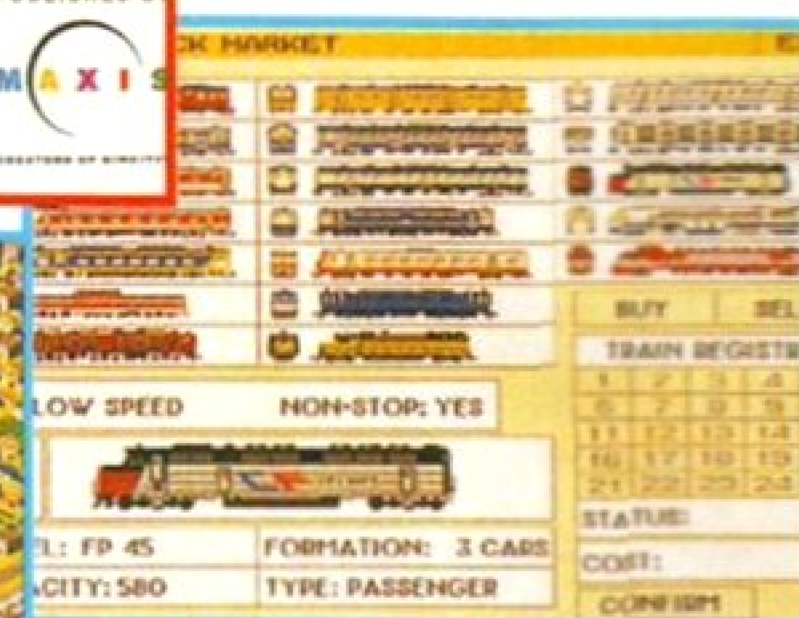
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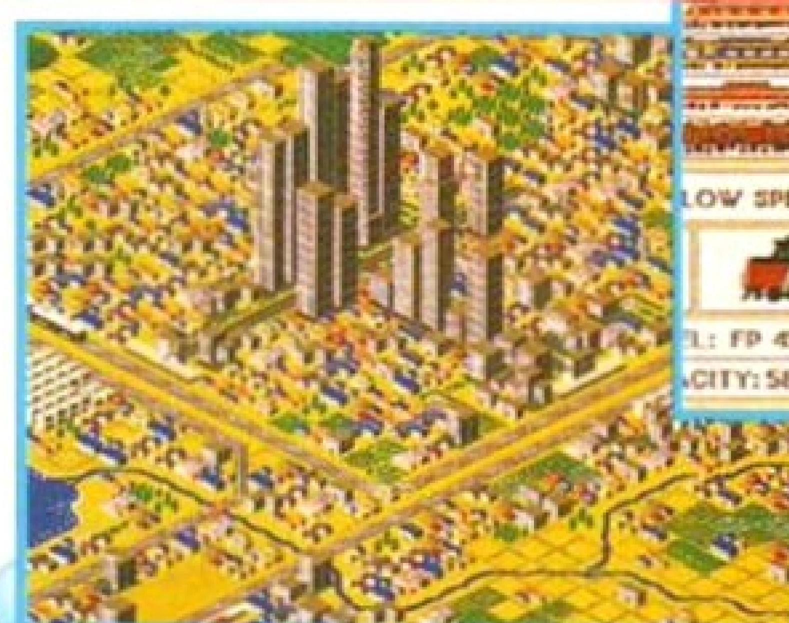
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AMIGA FORMAT 40
NOVEMBER 1992

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Oh no, really? of the month

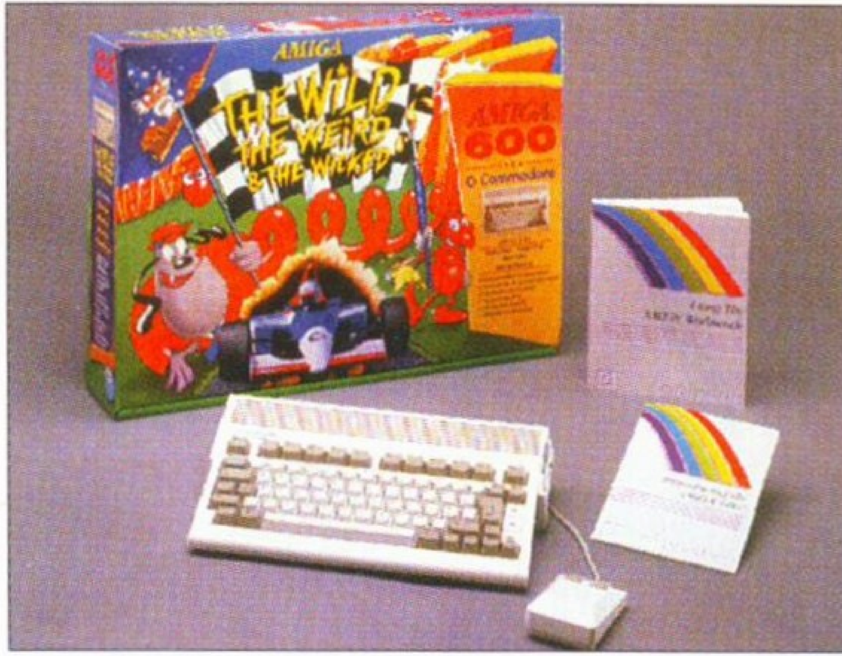
If there are more people alive now than have ever died, where does that leave the theory of reincarnation eh?

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.



Registered Circulation
161,256
Jan – July 1992

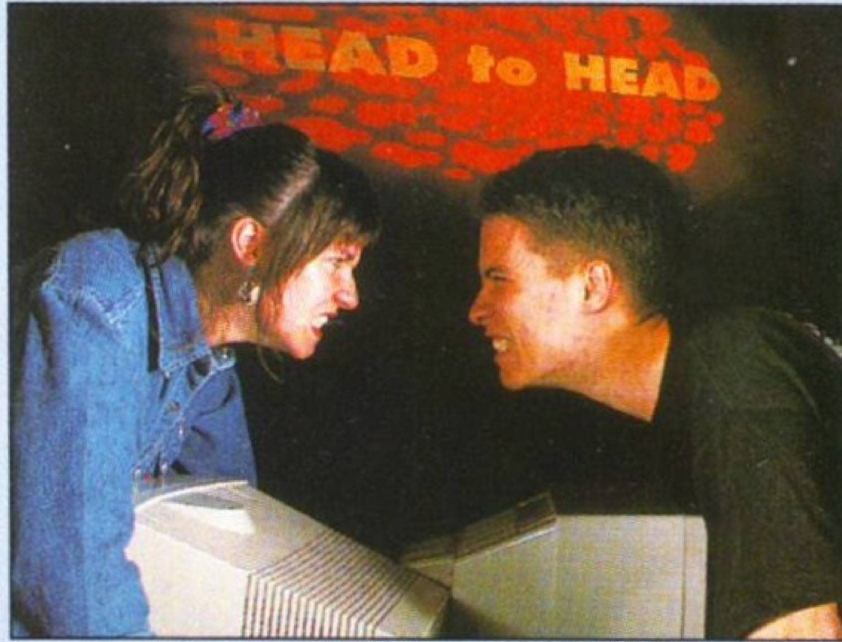
News 13



IN NEWS

Goodbye to the Cartoon Classics at long last. Six games and education. But can Commodore's two-pronged attack really counter and beat the consoles?

Screenplay 65



JOIN HANDS!

Not touching the tables here. We show you how the power of two, or even three or four, linked Amigas can make a huge difference to your playing pleasure.

Reviews



REVIEWED
The Alfa Data Scanner

What better device for your graphics-engine of an Amiga than a spanking new scanner?



REVIEWED
XCAD2000

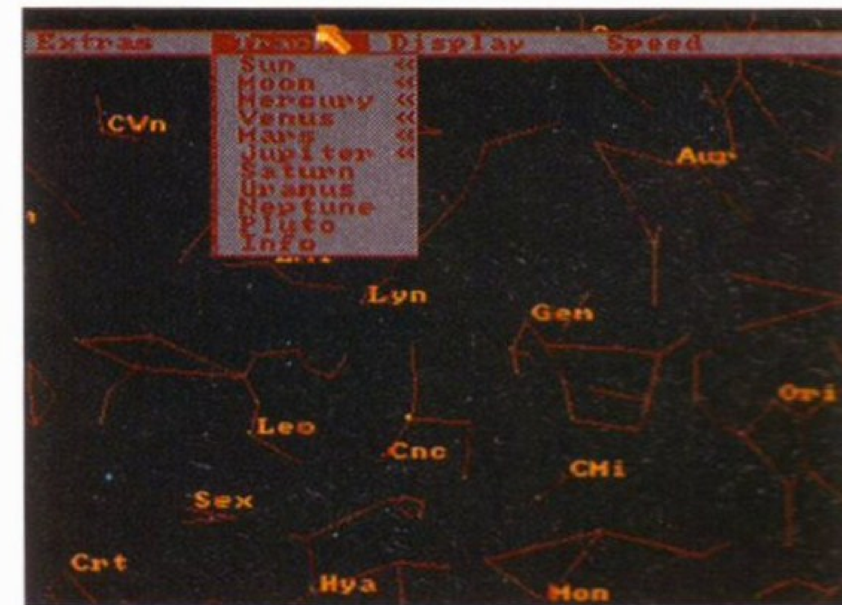
Move over PCs, the Amiga can do this computer aided design stuff as well, if not better than the beefiest of IBM's offerings.

Win! Win! Win 77



PRIZES GALORE!
Not only do we have 10 copies of Gremlin's zippy-fast, *Zool*, we also have some very strange (but linked) prizes to give away.

Regulars



IN PUBLIC DOMAIN

With the interest rates buggin-out as they have been recently, at least there's one thing you can count on: good value PD.



DEMO-STRATE!

More home-made Amiga wonders for you to view. We've got plenty on show, from diving birds to dynamic illusions and *Maggie 2*.

DeluxePaint Deluxe tutorials



Whether you're a beginner, a half-decent DPainter, or you're advanced in your grasp of Electronic Arts' excellent graphics program, you are bound to get something out of our mammoth, step-by-step guides to DeluxePaint III. You'll also get some insights into what the professionals can do...

PAGE 29



Which digitiser?

Even if you can't draw, you can still get some amazing images into your graphics. We put Amiga digitisers through their paces so that you can be absolutely sure of making the right decision PAGE 185

The word at war

A word processor is not just for the boring things in life, you could make a million with one (well Jeffery Archer did!). Find out which one is best for you PAGE 151

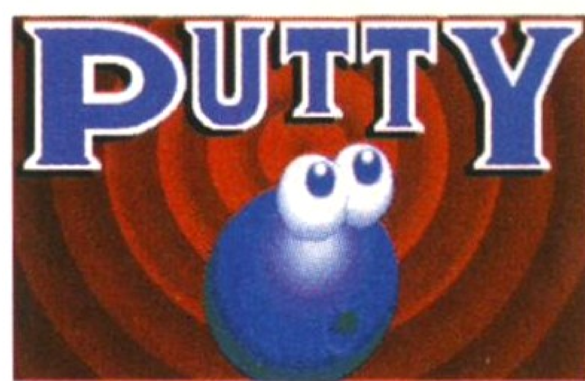
Exhibitionists

Read our preview of the biggest computer show in the country. The Future Entertainment Show is yours to enjoy PAGE 16

Game reviews in ScreenPlay



IN GAMES THIS MONTH: James Pond bids to show just what can be done without the use of steroids... or legs.

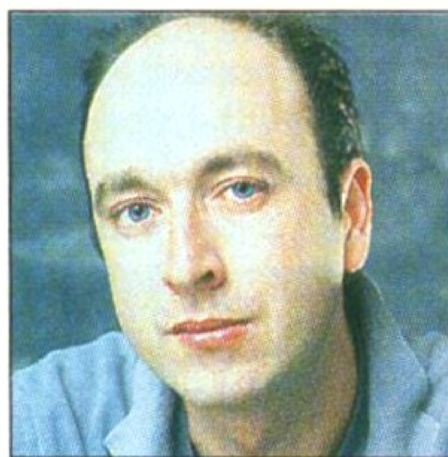


IN GAMES THIS MONTH: after much haggling in the *Amiga Format* office, did we think this is the best game ever?

Welcome to Amiga Format!

Hello and welcome to Amiga Format and to the long, cosy nights that lay ahead. It's the November issue and it's packed with more information, in more detail, and with a greater attention to your needs than ever before. We don't think that you will find a better read anywhere this month.

The Amiga family is proving, day-in-day-out that it is the most versatile collection of home computers that you can buy anywhere in the world. And this month we look at a few of the areas in which it really excels: graphics with our mammoth 10-page 'How-to' guide incorporating tips and hints from the combined knowledge of the Amiga Format team and professional games designers from Domark, Psygnosis and Bullfrog: digitisers, these incredibly useful devices can make a world of difference to your graphics – they don't cost the Earth and could make the world of difference to your artistic efforts. In this month's Amiga Format Collection we've included both TVText , an excellent titling utility for your videos, and Cross-DOS which will enable you to make use of other computer formats from the security, ease and comfort (tried using MS-DOS recently?) of your Amiga.



Damien Noonan, Editor

On the news front, Commodore (UK's) MD, Kelly Sumner had a great deal to say about the future of the Amiga this month, and we were there to take notes on it. The news that he and his company have got behind the A600 with two new packs is excellent for the long-term, especially when you consider that Commodore also have an important new hardware launch at the Future Entertainment Show. So this winter could be a time for contentment but not complacency for all of us. This is Amiga Format, at your service. Have a great read...

COVERDISK over the page...

AMIGA FORMAT Arcade Issue 40

The Chaos Engine

Find out if the Bitmaps have done it again with this all-action blast-em-up.

Play US Gold's atmospheric, texture-mapped, adventure RPG, starring your fave AF staffers.

Legend of Valour

Plus: More Bullfrogs' programming tutorial files

1Mb and 512K ● A 500 Plus Compatible

Legend of Valour



For the first time ever, you get the chance to beat-up several members of the Amiga Format staff in US Gold's custom-made playable adventure RPG demo.

Chaos Engine



Very weird science indeed from the Bitmaps. Babbage's machine goes mad in this high-speed, high-tension, two-player, all action thriller of a demo.

The AMIGA FORMAT Collection

No.8 RRP £100 TVText CrossDOS

The easiest Video Titler available!

FULL VIDEO TITLING PACKAGE! TVText: it must be the simplest way to give your videos the professional touch!

FILE EXCHANGE UTILITY! Cross-DOS: open you Amiga up to the outside world with this excellent utility.

CROSS DOS

● A 500 Plus Compatible ● 1Mb Required ●

In this month's *Amiga Format* Collection – a series of COMPLETE, FULL-PRICE programs – You get TWO great utilities for your Amiga...

TVText page 47

Part one: now you can turn your videos into professional-looking mini-movies with this easy-to-use titler program.

Cross-DOS page 57

Part two: don't limit your Amiga, with this incredibly useful utility you can make use of PC graphics, text files and even samples.

The Chaos Engine

Arcade Issue 40

Find out if the Bitmaps have done it again with this all-action blast-em-up.

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Legend of Valour

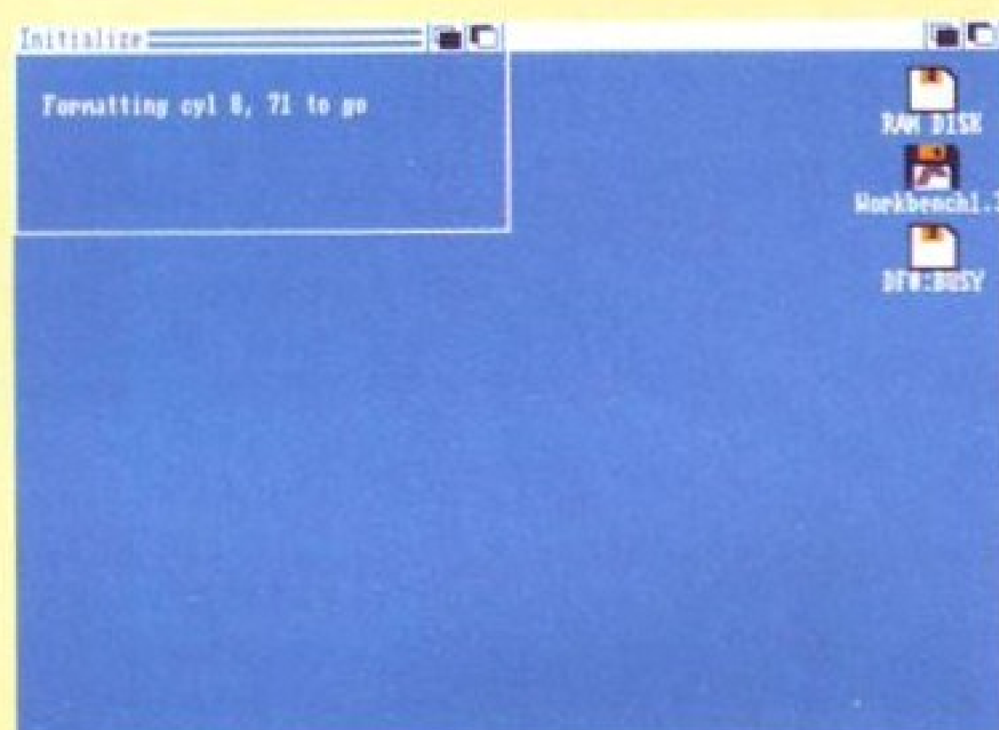
Plus:
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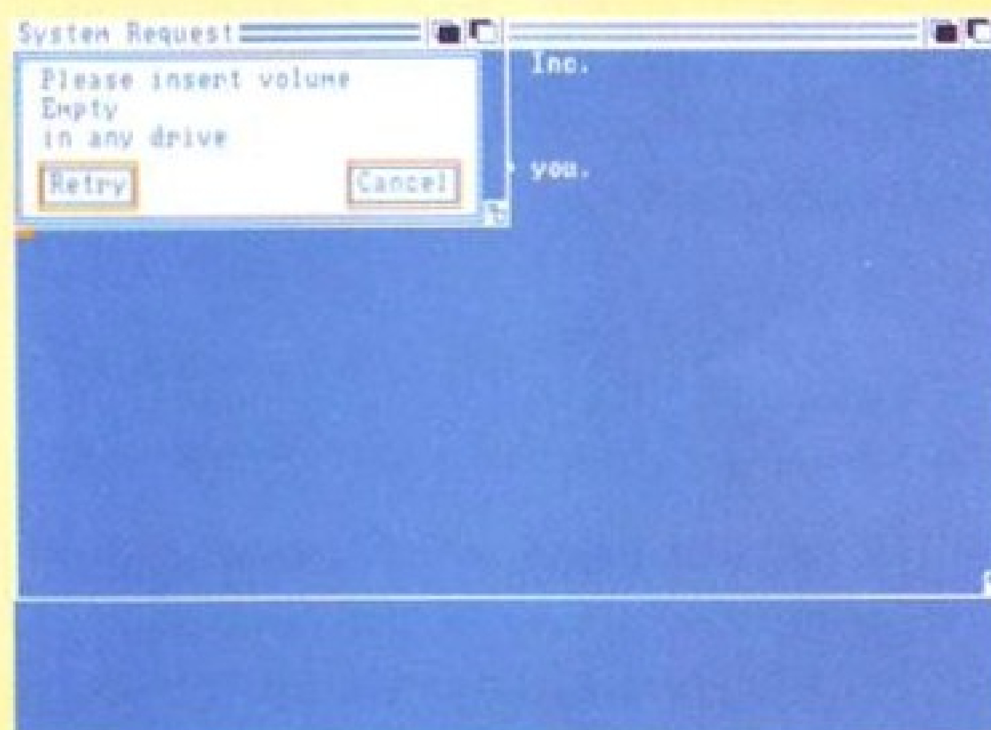
AMIGA FORMAT

Coverdisk

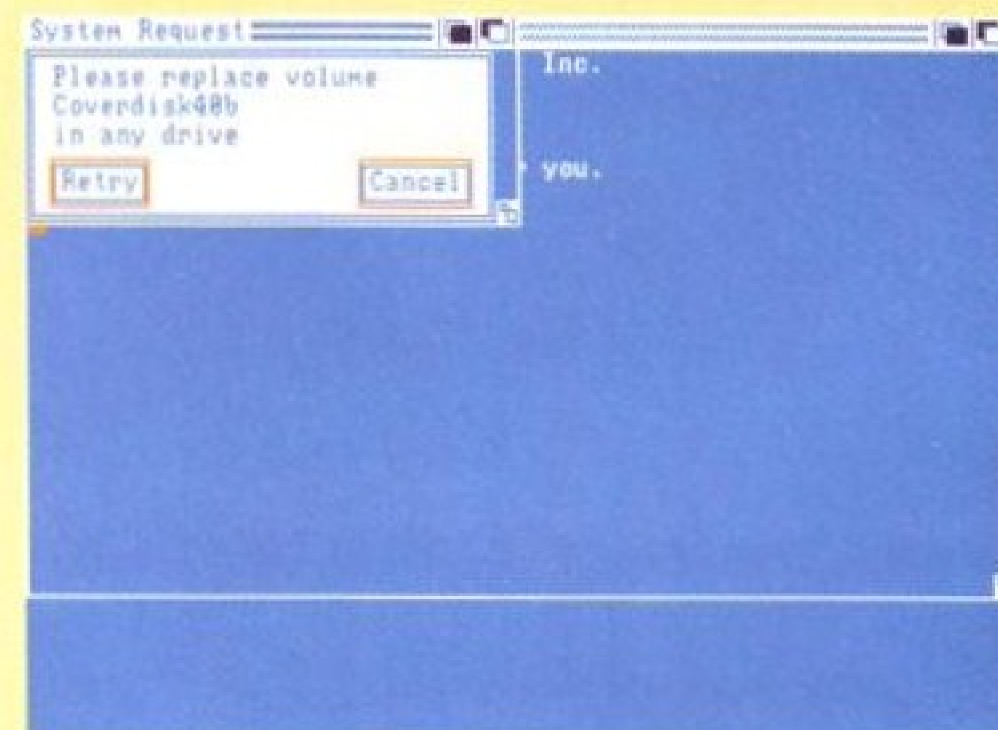
Damn! The two best game demos ever to appear on the Coverdisk, and together they're too big to fit! Never mind, they're squeezed on with the aid of a pretty nifty archiving program. All you have to do is get them on to two blank disks – which is pretty easy, as explained by **Pat McDonald**.



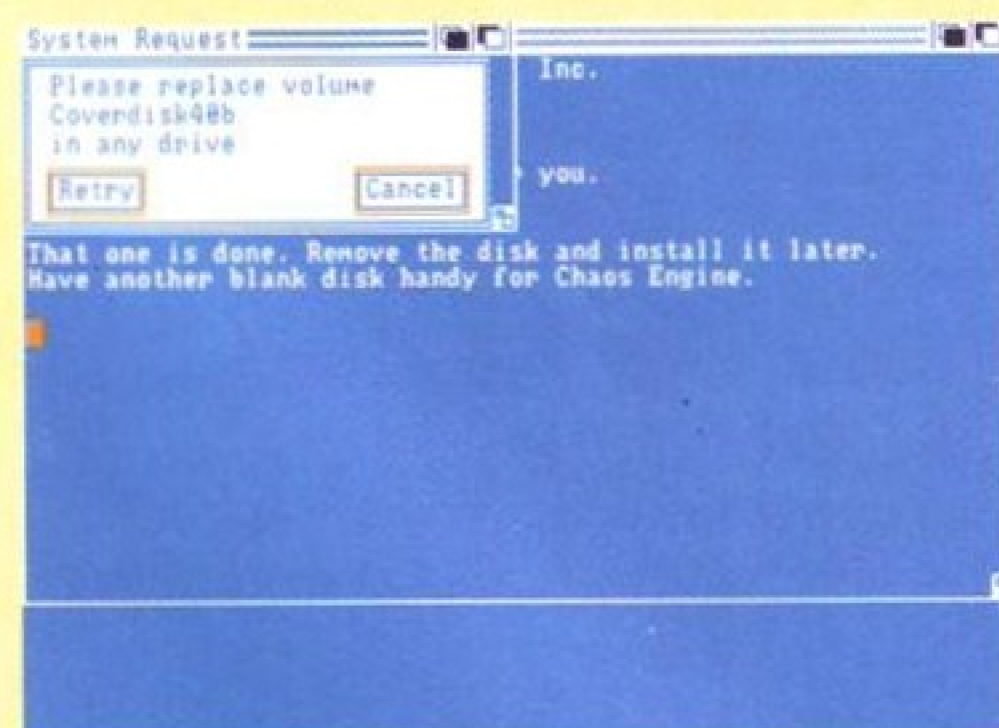
1 The first thing you have to do, before the Coverdisk has come anywhere near your machine, is to format two blank disks. This is very easy from Workbench; insert a disk to be formatted, click once on it (to highlight it) and select Initialise from the Disk menu on 1.3, or Format Disk from the Icon menu on Workbench 2. Both disks should now be called Empty.



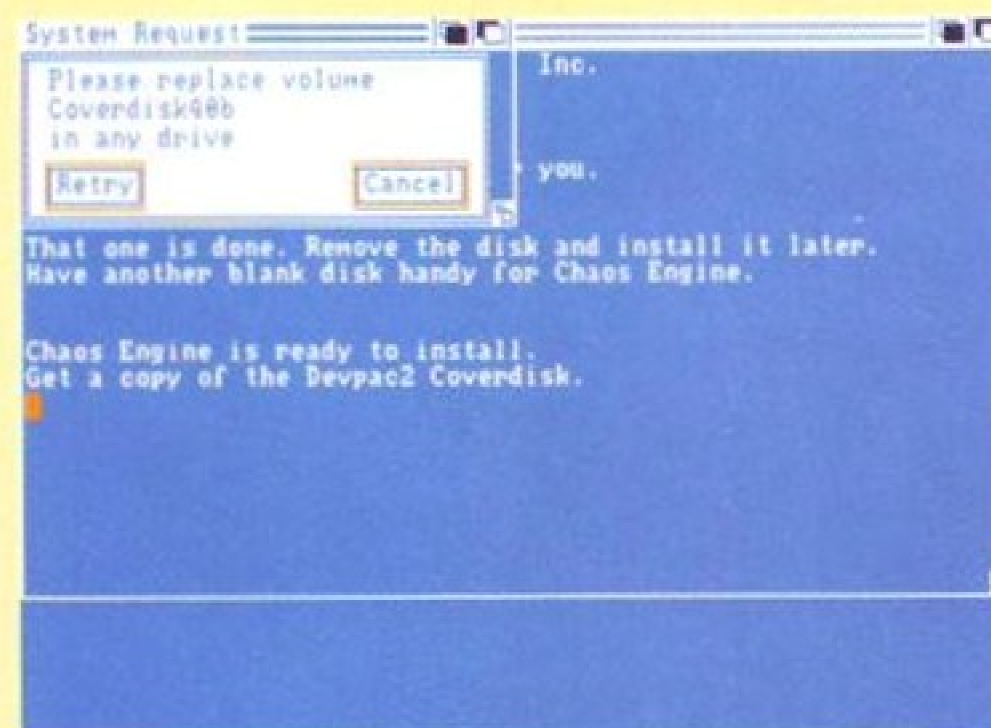
2 Reboot your Amiga, by holding down the Ctrl key and both the 'Amiga' keys that are either side of the spacebar. Then insert the Coverdisk. After a few moments of loading, the machine will ask for a disk called Empty. Insert one of the blank disks.



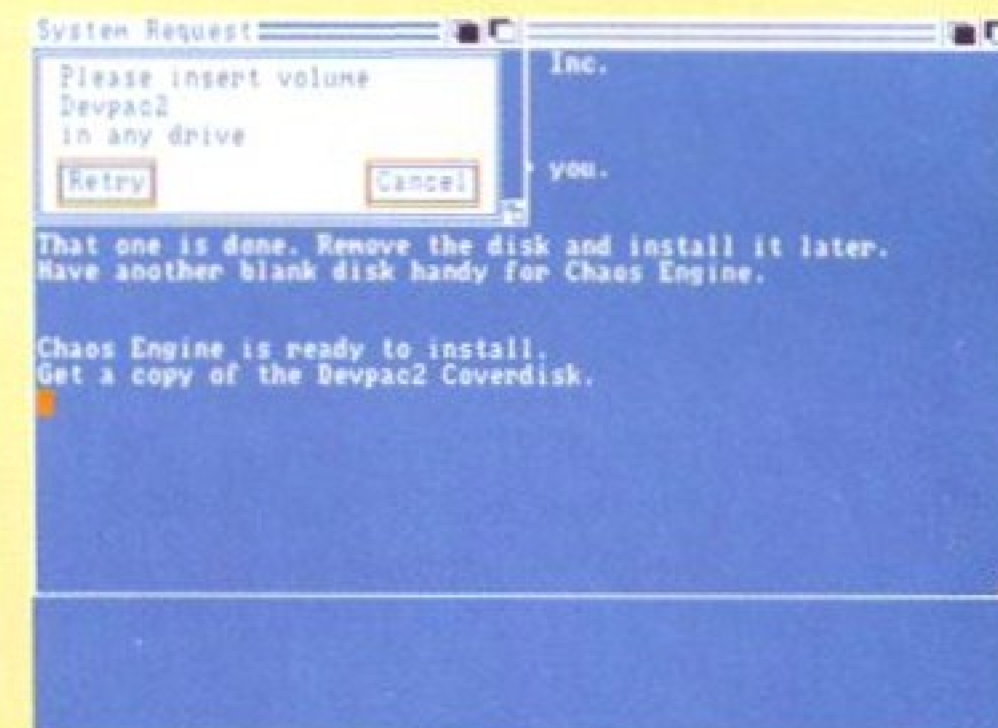
3 If you have two or more floppy drives, then you can wait until a message appears telling you that the *Legends of Valour* disk is ready. Otherwise you have to swap disks, I regret.



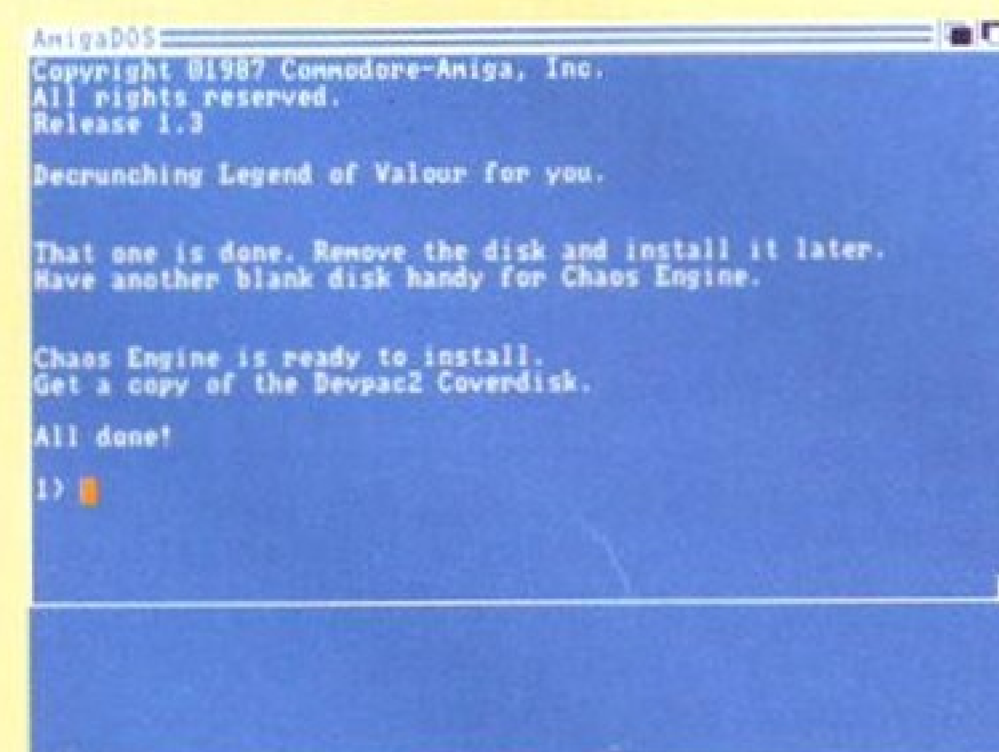
4 Once the message has appeared, check the drive light to make sure the Empty disk is not being accessed, take out the now not so blank disk, and insert the fully blank one. If you only have one disk drive, don't worry, the machine will ask you for the relevant disk.



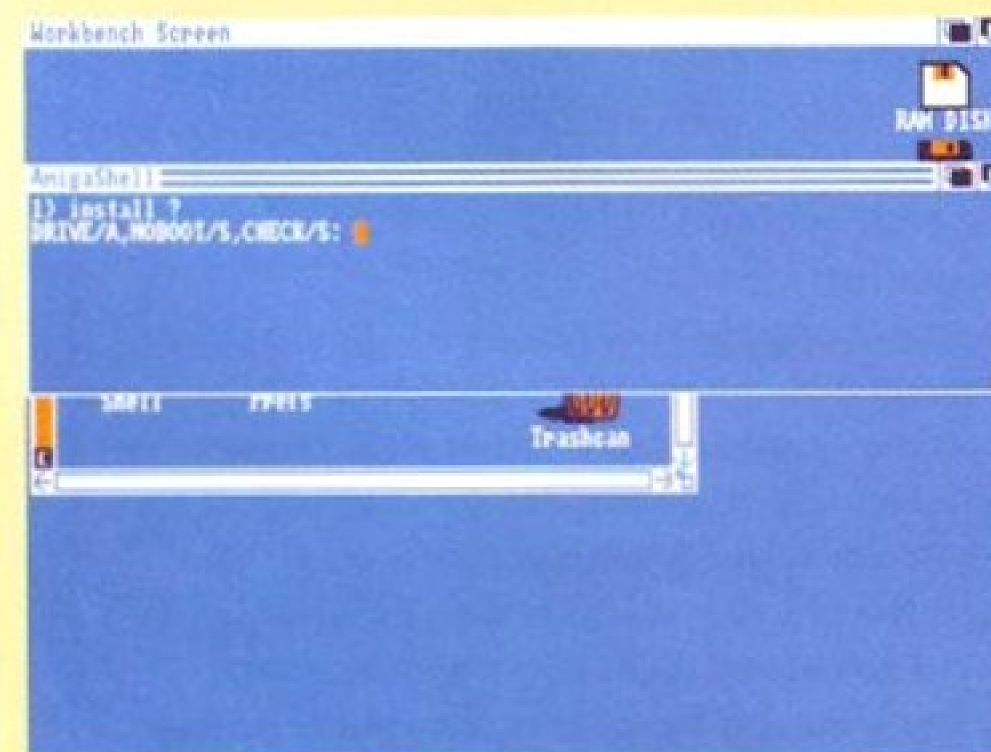
5 Again, if you only have one drive then you have to swap the Coverdisk together with the second blank disk. Eventually a message will appear telling you that the *Chaos Engine* is ready to be installed.



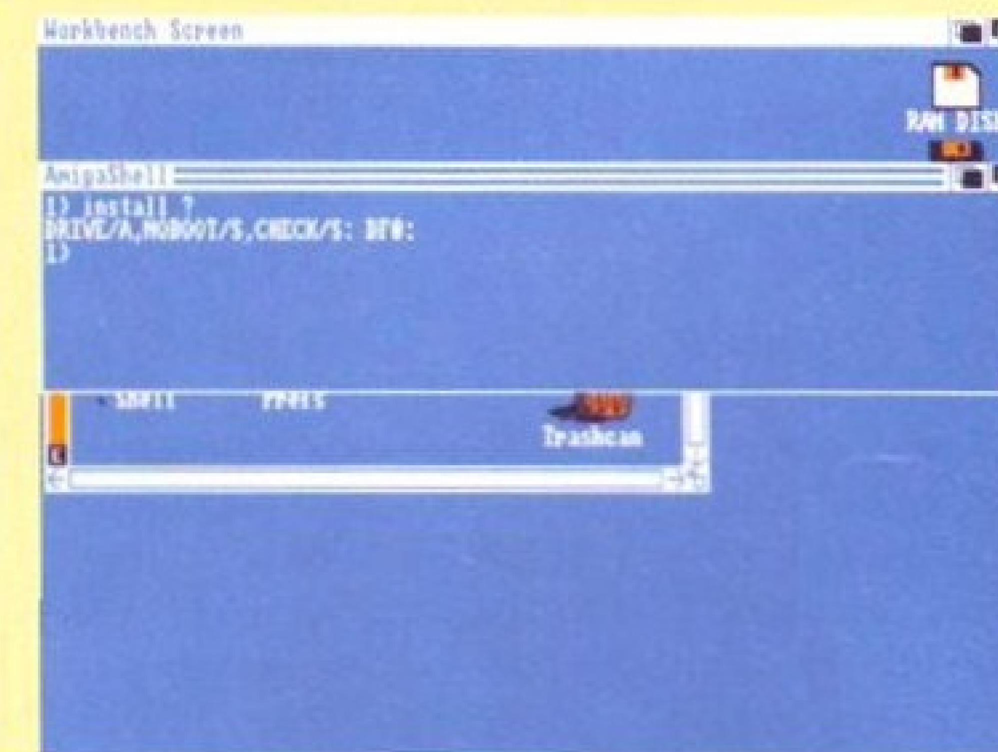
6 If you want to follow the Bullfrog's programming tutorial, then have a copy of the *Devpac 2* Coverdisk (from last month's issue ready. All the relevant files will be copied on to it. If you don't want the Bullfrog's demo, just click on cancel and move to stage 8.



7 Disk swaps for this last operation are mercifully rare. We are sorry that any are necessary, but they are in order for the Coverdisk to a) be compatible across the range of Amigas and b) contain *Legends of Valour* and *The Chaos Engine*.



8 You can't boot up and start going with the *Legends of Valour* and *Chaos Engine* disks straightaway. You have to install them. This is quite easy, once you know how. Load Workbench and get to the Shell or CLI.



9 Once you're there, type 'Install?' and press Return. A short message will display, asking you which disk you want to install. Take out Workbench, slip in either demo disk and type DF0: (0 is zero, not the letter Oh) before hitting return. The disk can now autoboot – just repeat the process to install the other one.

Legends of Valour

US GOLD/DCD PAL/NTSC

THE MOST IMPORTANT thing to bear in mind about this demo is that it's a very early one. However, the game it promises to grow into looks like being one of the most remarkable releases to date. This demo enables you to get a decent taste of the full program.

The most innovative feature of *Legends of Valour* is the main 3D display. Before, on similar games, you were either limited to very detailed views which could be flipped through 90 degrees (like *Chaos Strikes Back* or *Eye of the Beholder*) or you got a polygon-generated 3D display which moved well but looked crude (like *Cybercon III* or the *Freescape* games).

Legends uses neither approach. Instead, it maps and rotates walls and surfaces in a unique and very effective fashion. If you are a long way from what you're looking at, it appears blurred and indistinct. Get closer and the detail starts revealing itself. Move too close and all the detail looks blocky and pixellated.

The demo is quite limited in terms of what you can do. Currently, it looks like a standard fantasy role playing game – hack, slash, spellcast and so on. The main combat and spellcasting elements are simply not in there – but you can bet they will be in the final game.

However, as the designers DCD are quick to point out, this is not the main theme of the game. The main part is exploration – *Legends of Valour* is a 'Wander-about-em-up'. The key elements are hidden beneath a mass of detail. Try going through the doors and talking to the shopkeepers – although places differ little in detail in the demo, it's the detail and interaction which will make or break the finished game.

Try visiting different taverns, pubs and shops, and you will discover the notice boards. These give details of local employment opportunities, with commensurate rewards. You can also buy and sell commodities around the town, which is another source of income.

Legends of Valour is not just about trading though. The gameplan is to have a series of quests, which have to be completed in order to win. From the way DCD are talking, completion is going to be a long task – none of this 'buy-a-game-in-the-morning-and-complete-it-by-lunchtime' lark.

In the meantime, get stuck into this excellent taster. You can explore to your heart's content, but you will come across the occasional wooden fence which the programmers have used to stop you seeing the entire map. However, sources close to DCD have revealed there are a few hidden ways of getting around these... if you try hard enough. Sounds like a challenge, eh? Think laterally and experiment, good luck...



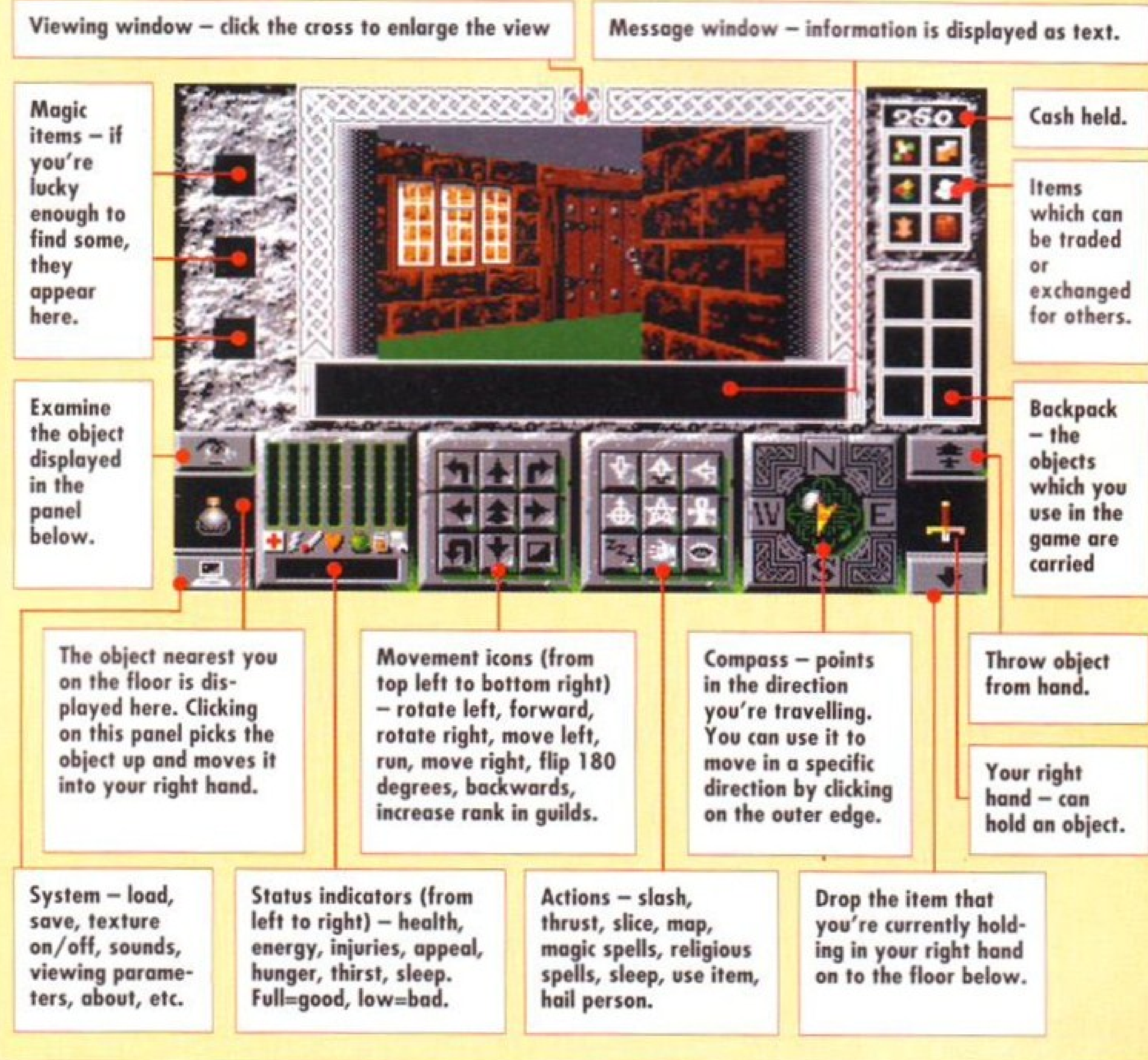
Click on Hail Person, and you are transported straight to the Dragon pub, where the landlord bears more than a passing resemblance to a certain reviews editor.

HOW TO CONTROL LEGENDS OF VALOUR

The simplest way of moving around is to click the left mouse button on the movement icon panel, selecting the icon which points in your chosen direction. There are keyboard shortcuts for these icons mapped on to the numeric keyboard (not A600s though, obviously).

For more fluid, but slightly more complex control, first press the right mouse button. This locks the view direction to the position of the mouse. You can happily spin round in circles and watch the view rotate in the main window. This is useful for fine positioning and when you're doing quick room searches.

In this mode, you can still walk around. Just line yourself up in your chosen direction and press the left mouse button. Your character strides forward in the current direction. To cancel mouse mode, just press the right mouse button again.





Although the graphics used in *Legends of Valour* are streets ahead of the competition, the other characters you meet tend to look a bit blocky when you get very close.



To speed things up a bit, click on the cross at the top of the main window. This toggles the screen size between the full view, and one that is faster, smaller and clearer.



Entering rooms is easy. Just walk straight at a door and it slides open to let you through. If it doesn't, back up a bit, line yourself up squarely and try again.

The Chaos Engine

RENEGADE/BITMAP BROTHERS **PAL/NTSC**



The full game will feature these character choice screens, where you choose who to do battle with.

WHAT HAVE THE Bitmaps been up to, apart from rehashing all their old games for the console market? Well fear not, those coders who polish their programs until they shine are back on the scene and are releasing another highly playable Amiga arcade game.

Chaos Engine is the latest example of the Bitmap's technique of taking a simple playing style and adding gloss until the original is tarted up to near perfection. This is a shortish level of what promises to be one of the most enjoyable blasting games with knobs on that these weary eyes have witnessed.

Hyperdrive without an r? Judge for yourself. This is a one or two-player demo featuring two of the six characters from the game. Player one always controls the brigand, an average combatant with a savage line in all around megablasts. Player two (if not controlled by the computer) takes the role of the gentleman, a less lethal character with a useful hobby of drawing maps.

The background to the game is that of a technological breakthrough in the Victorian era, when Charles Babbage actually got his difference engine to work. If you didn't take that in, essentially Babbage was the designer of the computer, but lived in an era which lacked the technology to bring his dreams into reality.

Put it this way; if you've ever read Edgar Rice Burroughs or played the role-playing game *Space 1889*, you'll find a lot of that material makes up the backdrop to the game. If you haven't, expect weird twists on familiar technology – steam-powered televisions and spaceships with speaking tubes for communication. Get the drift?

HOW TO WIN

1 In order to get further in the game, you have to collect the silver keys. These open various obstacles which bar your way.

2 You will find various radio mast structures, which should be shot at but avoided, as they don't half spark.

3 The golden keys unlock secret rooms and bonus stages. Always be wary of them, as more combat is involved too.

4 When you avoid enemy fire, try to dodge into a firing position. Aggression is the key to this sort of game.

5 Keep an eye out. The caves which spawn monsters and similar sources of bad guys can be spotted if you look for them.

In terms of gameplay, *Chaos Engine* appears to show little originality. For starters, *Chaos Engine* is played entirely with a joystick. The demo will autodisplay until you press a fire-button – after that, you decide whether you want solo or dual player (the latter requires two joysticks of course).

The actual gameplay is really very simple. Pressing fire unleashes bolts of destruction in the direction you are facing. Moving the joystick moves your character that way.

You can't really get more down to earth. The brigand's fire-power can be boosted by power-ups. Mind you, the gentleman's flamethrower tends to cut right through enemies, making him more lethal against groups of enemies.

There are quite a few factors which make the *Chaos Engine* different. For one thing, you tend not to get prearranged waves of nasties sweeping up to you in predictable patterns. All the bad guys have their own methods for attack, true, but exactly when and where they will strike is not a sure thing. This random element is quite a refreshing change.

Another attraction is that there isn't just one route to get to the same goal. There are plenty of secret rooms and freebies to find, and although the demo says 'Demo Completed' when you die, you should find there are quite a few different routes to try. There's also the obligatory Bitmap shop in there somewhere, though I must confess I have yet to find it.



The best way to play *Chaos Engine* is two player, with each character watching the other's back.



When surrounded by bad guys, use the brigand's special ability to take out lots of baddies.



Often you will find your progress barred by some obstacle. Eventually you'll learn all the twists and turns.

Using Your **Coverdisk**

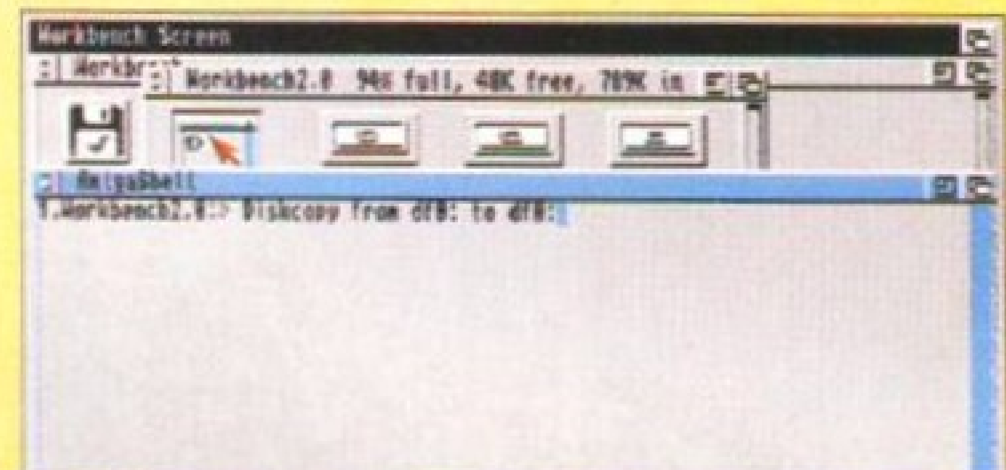
1. Always write-protect your Coverdisk. Move the tab so a hole is showing.
2. Copy the Coverdisk and use the copy, not the original. This may sound like a complicated task, suitable only for techno buffs, but it's surprisingly simple to do, just follow the simple instructions for copying the disk which are given below.
3. Read the instructions when using the programs.

Backing up your Disk

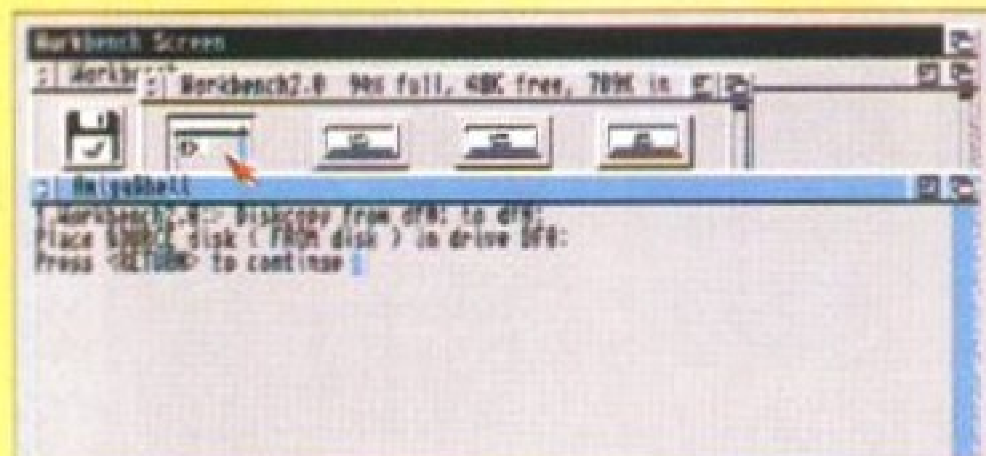
There are two ways of making a copy of your disk, and this is the easy one. Don't be daunted by the fact that you need to use the Shell or CLI: it's actually a lot easier than you might think. Just follow these simple steps…



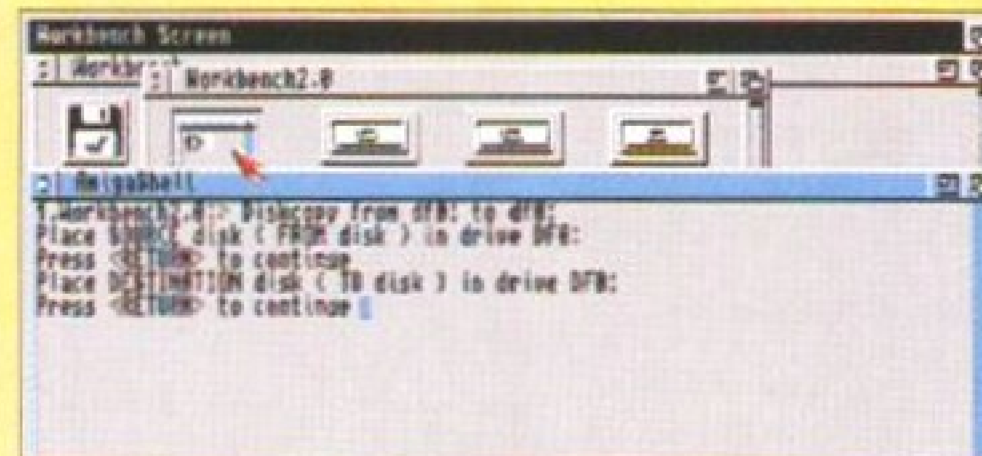
1 Load your Workbench disk. Open the disk, find the icon that says Shell or CLI and double-click on it.



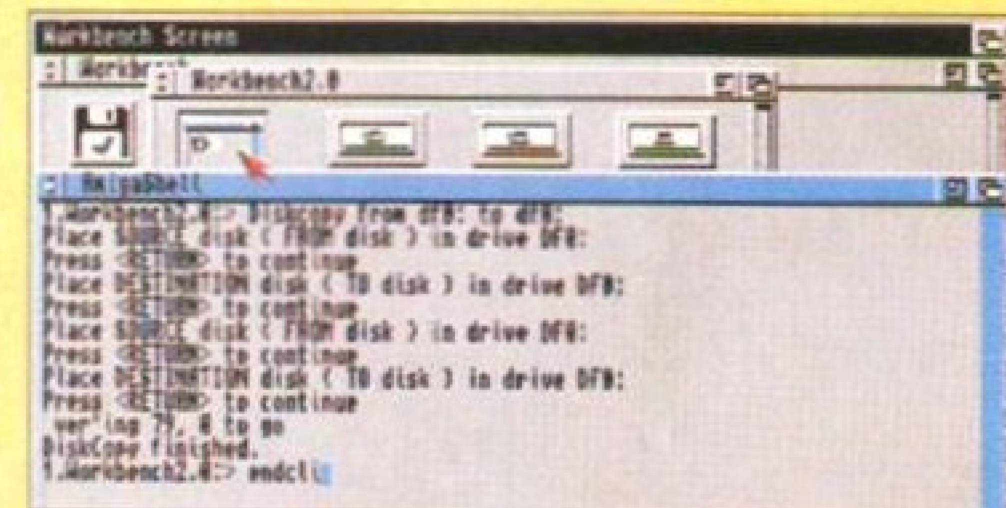
2 When the Shell window appears and the drive light is out, type in:
`Diskcopy from DF0: to DF0:`
and press the Return key.



3. The Amiga will now ask you to insert the 'source' disk. It means the disk you want to copy, so put the Coverdisk in the drive and press the Return key.



4. Wait for a while and it will read all the information off the Coverdisk, telling you how far it has got. Then it will ask you to insert the 'Destination' disk. Put the disk you want to copy your Coverdisk on to in the drive and press the Return key. Note that the disk does not need to be formatted already.



5. Put the source disk and destination disk in a couple more times when the Amiga asks for them. When it says "Diskcopy Finished" just type in:
`endcli`
to get out of the Shell or CLI. You may have to put the Workbench disk in again. Now your copy is ready!

DISK PROBLEMS?

If you have a problem with the disk – and you're sure the disk is in full working order – then you may need a little help. If you ring us on any Tuesday, and ask to speak to Pat McDonald, he will do his best to help you. Please understand, giving this sort of advice is time-consuming and we are very busy people, so only call if you really have to and do be considerate if we can't talk to you just then. If the problem is particularly complex it is better to send it to us in written detail. It will then be dealt with in the Workbench pages of the magazine.

BE CAREFUL!

We have done our best to check that all of the programs on the ***Amiga Format*** Coverdisk are simple to use and have no viruses. We cannot usually answer complex telephone queries on the software (see the Disk Problems? box) and we do not accept liability for any consequences of using the numerous programs that are on the disk.

COPYRIGHT

Unless it is specifically stated, the programs on the Coverdisks are not in the Public Domain and the copyright remains with the copyright-holder of the program.

Because some of the programs on the Coverdisks are not PD, selling or distributing them without the copyright-holder's specific permission is against the law.

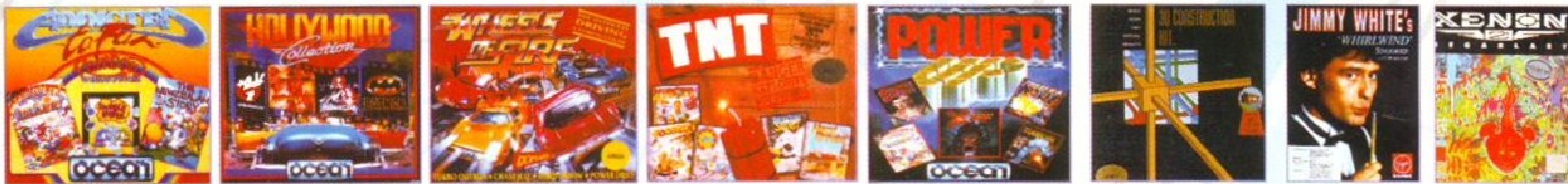
Disk not working?

We duplicate nearly 500,000 disks every month. Out of all those, obviously a few will be faulty. If the disk or any of the programs will not load or run properly, there may be a problem. Don't panic!

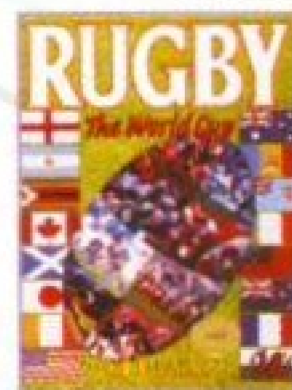
First try using the *DiskDoctor* utility on your Workbench disk to rescue it before sending it off for a replacement. In-full details of *DiskDoctor* can be found in the user's manual that came with your machine.

However, if your Coverdisk is in fact faulty, you should send it back INCLUDING A STAMPED, ADDRESSED ENVELOPE for a free replacement within one month of the cover date to:

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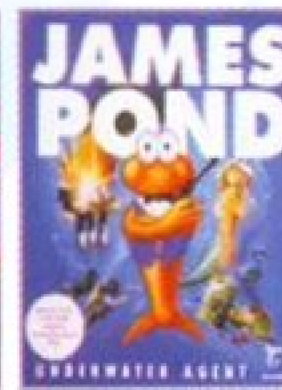
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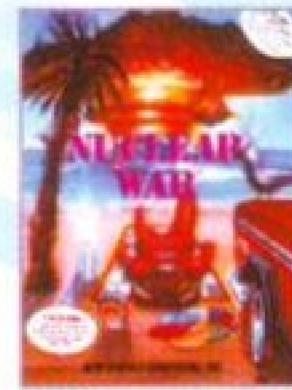

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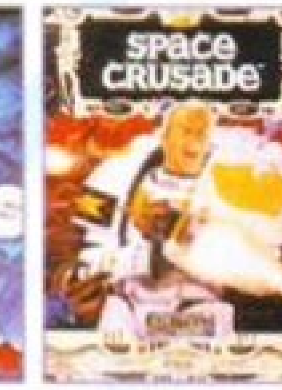

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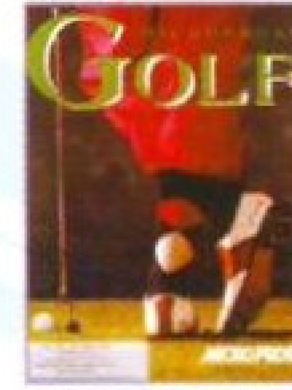

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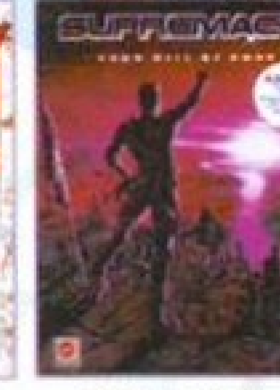

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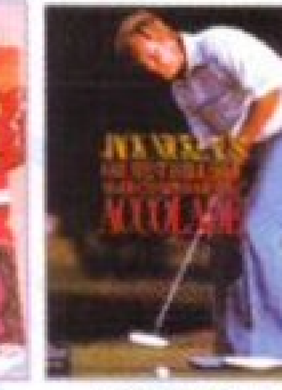

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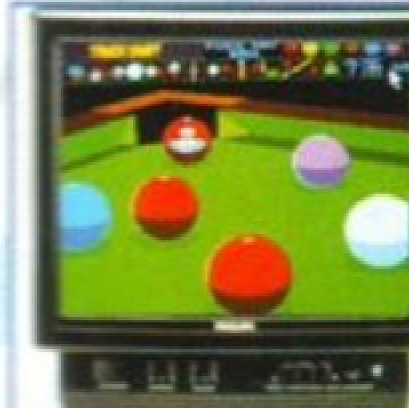
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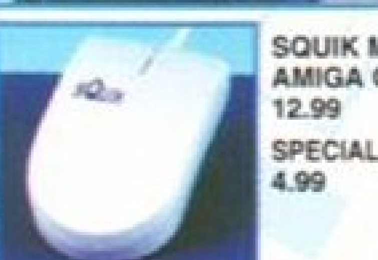
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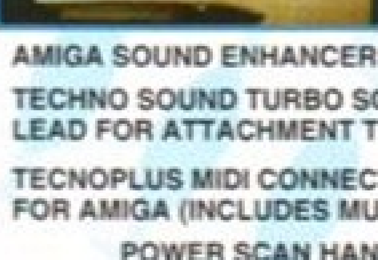
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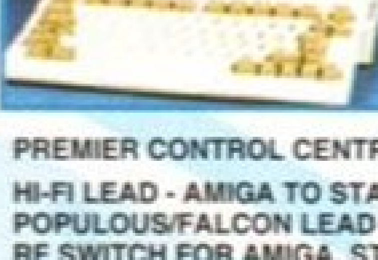
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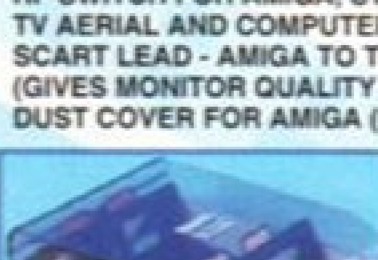


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A replacement for the hugely successful Cartoon Classics pack is announced...

Two new Amiga bundles

COMMODORE HAVE finally killed off the Cartoon Classics bundle and have replaced it with two brand new A600 bundles.

Called The Wild, the Weird and the Wicked for the A600, and the Epic/Language Lab for the A600HD, the two packs should be in the shops this month.

The Cartoon Classics bundle – the vehicle for the A500 and also under confusing circumstances, the A500 Plus and finally the A600 – served its purpose for two years but was not up to the job of showing off all the qualities of the A600.

Since January, the two new bundles have been crafted especially for the new machines. As Commodore (UK's) managing director, Kelly Sumner, explained at the recent launch: "The A600, Wild, the Weird and the Wicked pack will be available at £349.99. It's a direct replacement for Cartoon Classics. It has in there, *Pushover* from Ocean, *Putty* from System 3, *DeluxePaint III* obviously from Electronic Arts, and MicroProse's *Grand Prix*.



Steve Franklin, right, the man who refused to cut the price of the A500: and Kelly Sumner, left, the new Commodore UK MD who has now cut the price of the A600.

"There are details of how to fit everything on the back. Even though the failure rates on A600s are far less than A500s we've even put quick connect guides in there."

He also explained about the A600, single-drive pack which is aimed at the younger audience: "We also have the A600 HD pack. You have in there *Epic* from Ocean, *Rome* from Millennium, *Myth* from System 3 and *DeluxePaint III* from Electronic Arts.

"Slightly different, this is the dual-sided pack with the Amiga Language Lab on the back. This contains *Trivial Pursuit* in three languages – German, English and French, a multi-lingual dictionary to help you out, and *AmigaText* which is a basic word processor. This will retail at £499.99 so there is no change in price."

The two new packs are a positive move and show Commodore's commitment to the long-term future of the A600.

SMART MOVE

One noticeable element of the new packs is the lack of any software for the PCMCIA credit-card drives. Sumner made his point quite strongly on the absence of even a taster: "They're damned expensive. And when Fujitsu and Mitsubishi and all these guys get their acts together and realise that they're over-priced, we may well do something.

"We're not going to take the lead, we're liaising with a lot of software publishers now, not on the games side, and third-party manufacturers. But realistically I don't think you'll ever see a game on a smartcard, you'll certainly see word processors and graphics because there's a long lead time and the cost is prohibitive. We realistically believe that CD is the better option."

> "When we put the packs together we realised we had no big blockbusters, so we went for products that were either visually effective or bloody good to play."

EPIC STRUGGLE

Much attention was also called to the fact that Ocean's *Epic* – a long-awaited game that was a sad disappointment in the gameplay department – is to headline the 'more mature' bundle. Sumner was incredibly diplomatic on this point: "*Epic* is visually a very impressive game. Basically all our packs are put together in January. We went with *Epic* basically because at that time Ocean said it was going to be the best thing since sliced bread.

"When we put the packs together, we realised that we had no big blockbusters like *Batman* or *Bart Simpson*, so we decided to go for products that were either visually effective or were bloody good to play. We believe we've got the right mix here."

When prompted as to how good *Epic* was as a game, Sumner commented: "I'm not a games player, but my guys say it's OK. I saw it about a year ago and thought it was amazing. At the end of the day you're buying HDs out there for £499, you're getting seven pieces of software for nothing, so you can throw the *Epic* away if that's what you want. You're still getting *Rome* and *Myth* which are bloody impressive".



The two new packsfor the A600: on top The Wild, the Weird and the Wicked; on the bottom the back and front of the Epic/Language Lab pack.

GOOD NEWS

The bottom line of all this for people who currently own and use Amigas is that Commodore have finally shown a considerable long-term and financial commitment to the A600. The machine certainly looks like it will be with us for quite a while.

Amiga Format's special thing

Following the good news that Commodore have placed financial and long-term faith in the A600, we are proud to announce that in every one of the two new bundles will be special editions of *Amiga Format*.

The world's most popular Amiga magazine will greet all the new users as they dive into the delights of their spanking new machines.

This will undoubtedly mean more readers join the throng that is the *Amiga Format* members club. And more readers mean more tips in Game Busters, more letters in er... Letters and more of a chance for us to bludgeon the publishers of *AF* into giving you better and better Cover disks, more pages, bigger features and even more special, special offers and competitions.



Anyone who buys one of the new Amiga bundles will receive a free special edition of the world's biggest-selling Amiga magazine.

Rengade announce a move towards CD software in a bid for cheaper software and to counter piracy...

Sensible Soccer sensible prices

RENEGADE SOFTWARE'S recent announcement that they were going to enter the CDTV arena with a £19.99 version of their smash hit *Sensible Soccer*, has livened up Commodore's hi-tech Amiga more than any announcement.

Renegade's spokesman Tom Watson, said: "There were a number of reasons behind the pricing. First, we have not enhanced the game for Compact Disc. We could have added some bells and whistles, some frills on top of the floppy version, but that is exactly what they would have been."

In effect, adding on a few cosmetic changes to the CD version is one of the many reasons software publishers have found for selling on a cheaper storage media (a single CD is cheaper to produce and buy than four or five floppy disks) at a higher price. Watson feels the consumer deserves a better deal, and that the software publishers could also be doing themselves a favour.

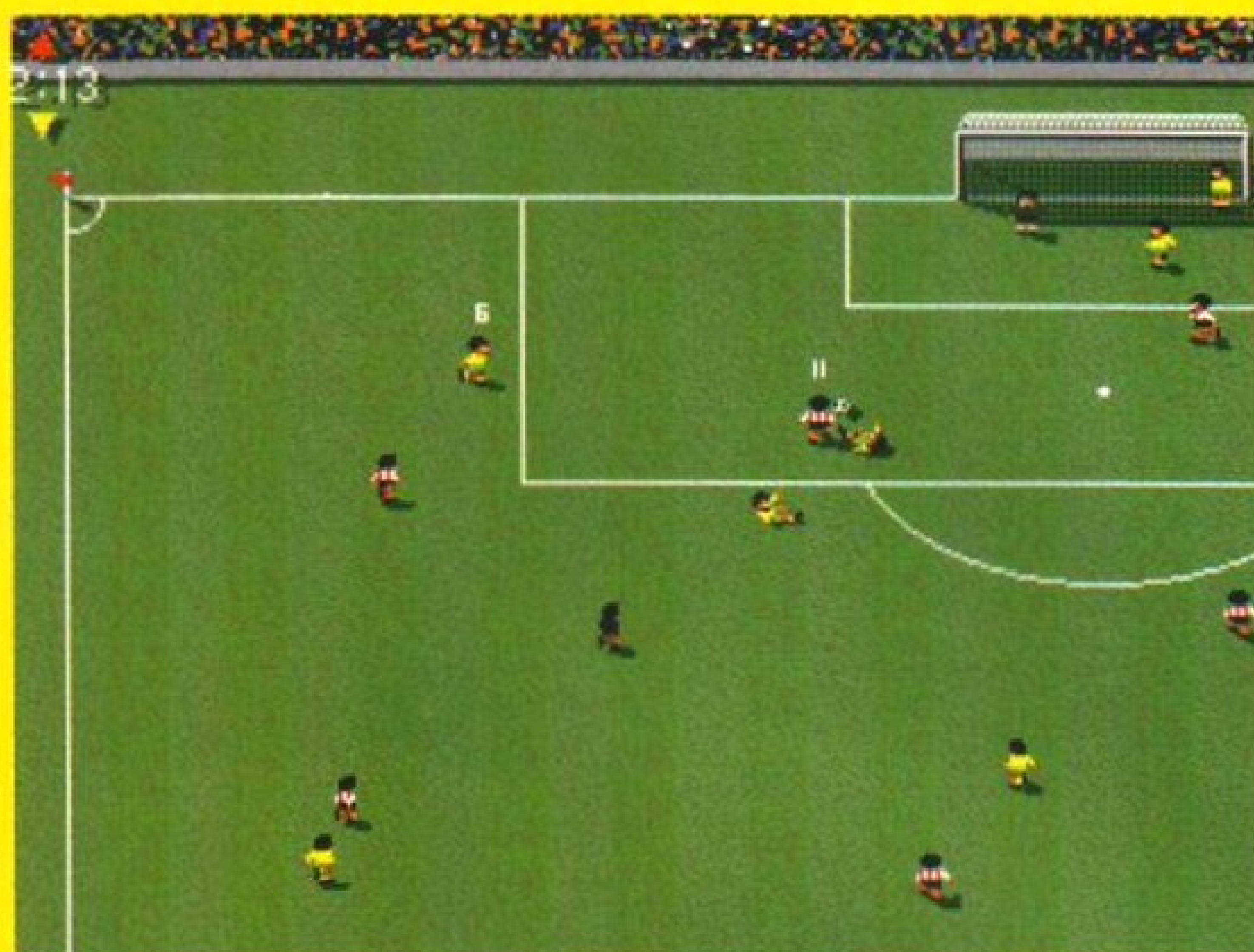
"The message that should go out, and it's an important one, is that the CD is unpirateable. For a long time now the publishers have been saying that they will bring down the price of software as and when the pirates stop. The pirates have been saying that they will stop pirating software when the prices drop. Of course it's a chicken-and-egg situation. And we all know that neither was going to happen first.

"The message that we want to get across is that CDs are cheaper than floppies and they also can't be pirated. So get into CDs and the prices will then come down."

This seems to be a constant argument in the software and hardware industry at the moment. At a recent press conference, Commodore's managing director in the UK, Kelly Sumner, pointed out: "The reason that they [software houses] say that they have to charge £24.99 or £34.99 is because of the piracy problem and they just don't get the return. But using a CD, there is so much code there that if someone wants to pirate the disk it will cost them more to buy the blanks than it will for them to buy the original. And that's the only way we are going to stamp out piracy.

"So, if a game was £19.99 and it takes 40 disks to copy, it's not worth it for a pirate, he might as well go and buy the original. OK so he might get a kick out of it, but it's a pretty expensive kick – and he'd get a very sore wrist from putting the disks in and out. So that's the plan, to get CD software as inexpensive as possible."

All of this bodes extremely well for the CD-buying, CDTV and A570 owning, Amiga users: CDs could well be the format of the future. We just wish that Commodore, despite their playing-up of the CD market, would be a little more forthcoming with news of the imminent A670 release.



Tom Watson, of Rengade software, has decided to brave it in the CD arena with the excellent *Sensible Soccer*. And why the hell not, surely this is the format of the future?

New Bridgeboard ahoy

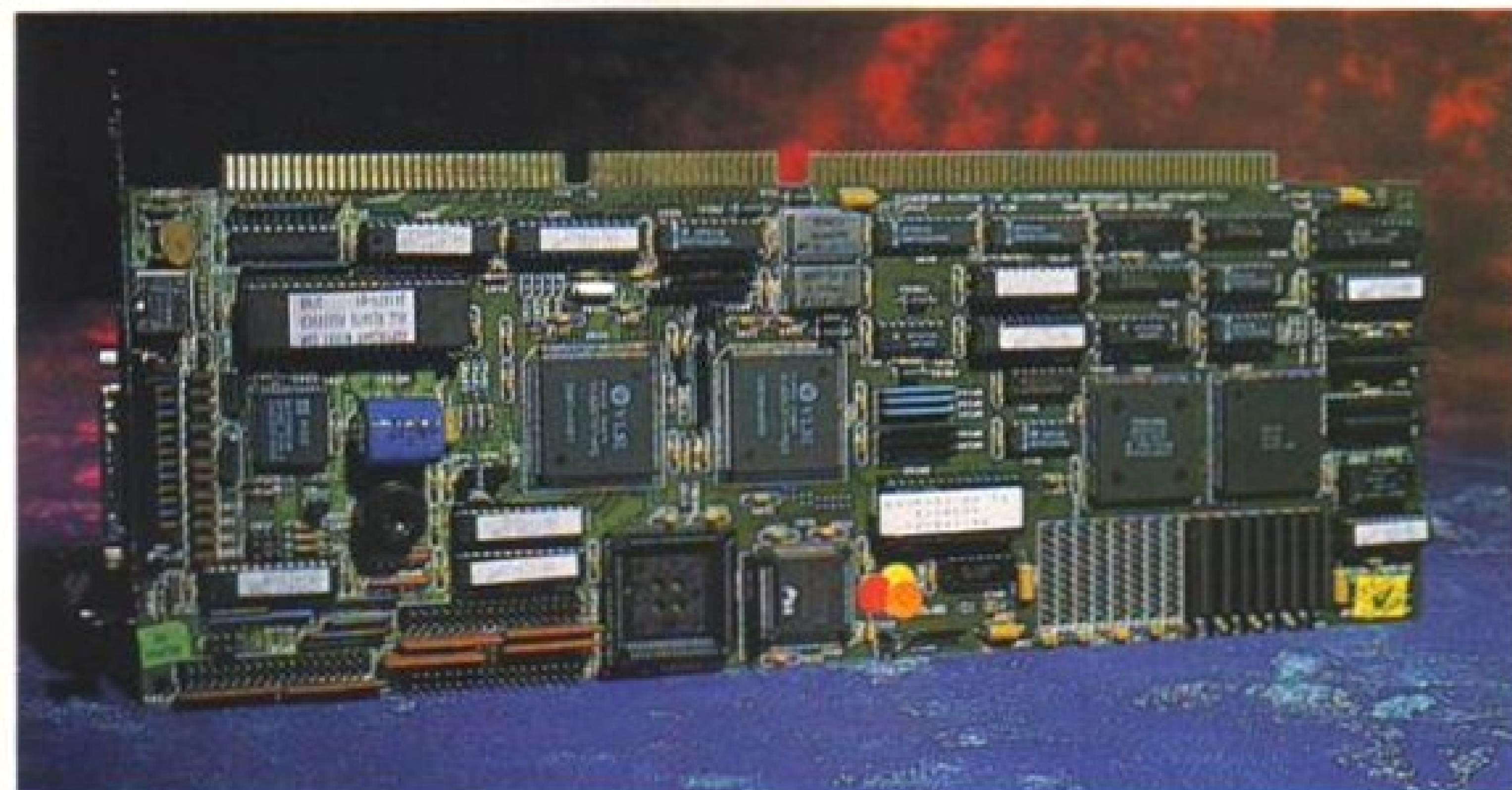
All this hype being kicked up about the IBM PC and compatibles being this month's flavour, it now seems the right time for Commodore to show that the Amiga can more than hold its own. To this end, the company have released a new bridgeboard.

To start off with this will be on the 2000, 3000, 15000 machines. It is going to be a 386sx/25 bridgeboard with 2Mb of RAM on board. It can be configured for the Amiga or the PC, and it will be priced around the £250 mark.

Good news for A600 hundred users is that, according to Kelly Sumner: "It is envisaged that we will be looking to do something similar for the A600 but I suggest that we will do this at a different price point."

This different price point should be lower than the more highly specified, but will probably take into account that less RAM will be on board.

The fact that Commodore feel comfortable taking on the PC in this way bodes very well. Unlike other home computers, the Amiga is not likely to fade away under the threat that is being worked up by some of the press and the PC makers.



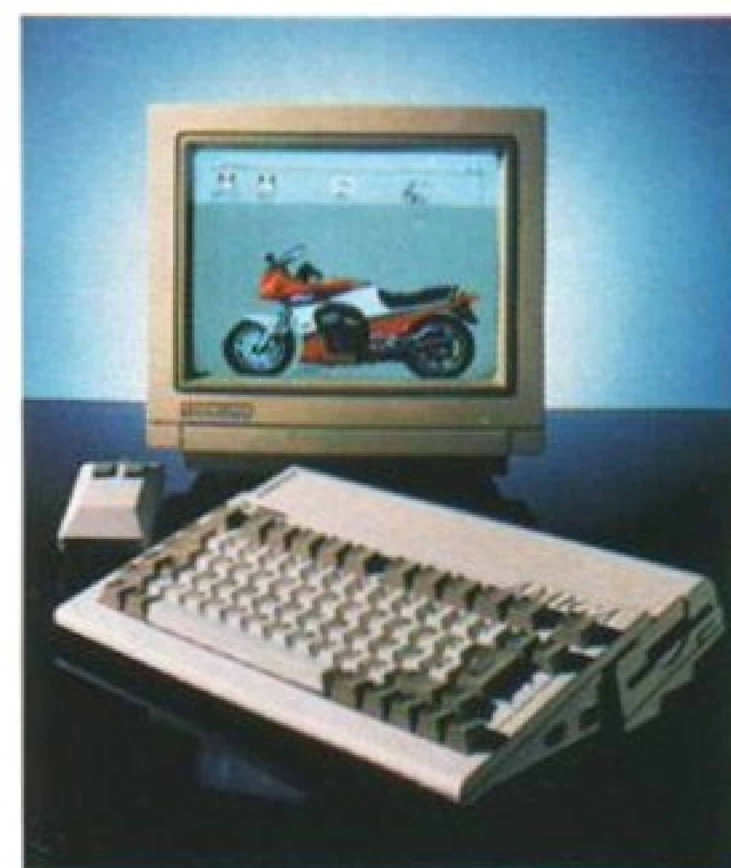
Commodore launch a new bridgeboard for the higher-end machines. A600 the next stop?

Scotland is braved

In a move that is sure to put a smile on the right side of David Mellor, and the rest of the government's face, not to mention the hard-pressed Caledonian workforce, Commodore are to make all of their UK issue Amigas in Scotland.

The news was announced by Commodore UK MD, Kelly Sumner at a recent press conference. He said: "We are now producing the A600 in England [well Scotland actually]. And when I say producing I don't mean just assembling, I mean actual production from the board layer up. So the chips and the plastic moulding are made in the UK.

"All the products for the UK pre-Christmas will be built in Irving in Scotland, and we export a significant number of Amigas to Europe so we will be a net exporter of Amigas this fiscal year. It's also created, rather secured, 200 jobs in Scotland. It is not Commodore UK, it's an associate company called SCI. And it's our intention to produce all Amigas in Scotland whether they be high-end or low-end.



The Amiga is Scottish – it's official. All UK Amigas are to be manufactured solely in the bonnie town of Irving.

"This is basically endorsing our belief in what the UK Amiga market's going to be and what it is at the moment. It's not easy, it's not cheap to set up a production plant, we believe it's going to be a good market."

The move away from the Far East and to the near North will not affect Commodore's pricing plans, however. It seems that the move was considered before the £100 price drop of the Amiga 600 took place. What it does mean though, is that supplies, and hopefully support, will be speeded up over the busy periods.

The Future Entertainment Show

The Preview

THE WORLD OF Commodore Show, which was such a huge success last year, has grown and grown, and has become the Future Entertainment Show. In fact, it is estimated that the new-look World of Commodore/Future Entertainment Show will be three times as big as last year's extravaganza.

The FES is the biggest computer exhibition in Europe this year and the biggest ever computer show in the UK (in fact, it is the third largest exhibition of any kind in the UK this year).

It has attracted such interest from inside and outside of the Amiga world that the organisers have had to take up more than 17,000 feet of space in order to pack all the exhibitors in.

More than 70 top-class exhibitors will be showing their wares at the Show this year. Many of these will have special show deals at just the right pre-Christmas moment.

The Show is not just going to be all about games-playing. There will be a concentration on gamsey stuff, but much of the space in the two massive Earls Court halls will be given over to the more serious side of the Amiga (and other machines so you can get a look at how the other side lives).

Beside all the computer-related sights, sites and sounds will be a few added extras to complete a day-out. For example there will be a 20-metre square video wall which is bigger than the one used at the WWF Summer Slam; there will also be bar-flying (sticking yourself to a velcro wall in a velcro suit) and a whole host of other activities.

NEW LAUNCHES AT FES

Many companies in the industry are using the Future Entertainment Show as the launchpad for new products (see side column on Commodore). Without giving too much away (and many of the companies concerned have slapped non-disclosure agreements on us), here are a couple of teasers:



The queues at last year's World of Commodore Show: big, but there's bigger to come.



NEW FINAL COPY NEW WORDWORTH

If you are wandering what happened to *Final Copy* in our round-up of word and document processors (Pages 151-158), the omission is because a brand new version is due to be launched at the Future Entertainment Show.

Not only will *Final Copy II* retail at (just) under £100 – it will cost £99.95 – it has also be been launched with a full UK spelling checker and thesaurus. To compound the good news is the fact that it will be sold officially in the UK for the first time. The UK retailers are going to be Gordon Harwood Computers (0773 836781).

To support an already healthy market, Digita are to announce the arrival of a new version of the popular and successful *Wordworth*. The upgraded word processor will come with 10 Compugraphic fonts, four ColourFonts and 100 pieces of mono and colour clip art. It also makes use of IntelliFont technology, which enables 1.3 and Workbench 2 users to display outline fonts in any size and style. It also means that you can mix internal printer fonts, Amiga outline fonts, ColourFonts, Postscript and bitmapped fonts in the same document. Be at the show to discover the price and other details that Digita might have up their sleeves.

Commodore's new machine?



The new A600 packs. But this isn't the only new hardware that Commodore has up its sleeve.

WITH ALL THE news of the new-look A600 packs you might be forgiven for forgetting that Commodore actually make all-new machines as well.

The first big news for this month is that the United States arm of Commodore finally came through with the long-awaited Amiga 4000. The eagerly anticipated launch of the high-end Amiga took place at the World Of Commodore Show in Pasadena, California in September.

Thought by many to be the first in a new wave of Amigas, the A4000 sports the Advanced Graphics Architecture chip set, giving a maximum of 256,000 colours on screen at once, from a palette of 16.7 million.

The UK launch of the machine will of course be at the Future Entertainment Show.

But it now appears that this won't be the only new hardware launch at the Show.

It now appears that the company will be making a splash at the Future Entertainment Show as they show a brand new machine.

Strong rumours in the software and developers arenas lead us to believe that what is expected to be a brand new Amiga will make its first appearance at the FES. At the moment full details are difficult to come by because Commodore are being heavily secretive about it.

With the A2200 now officially out of the running – Kelly Sumner, managing director of Commodore UK confirmed it "absolutely does not exist," at a recent press conference – a mid-range Amiga is sure to be a good bet.

Whatever the specifications of the A???? turn out to be, Commodore has assured us that it will be 'impressive'.

In fact, it looks to be the biggest public launch we have seen from the company since CDTV.







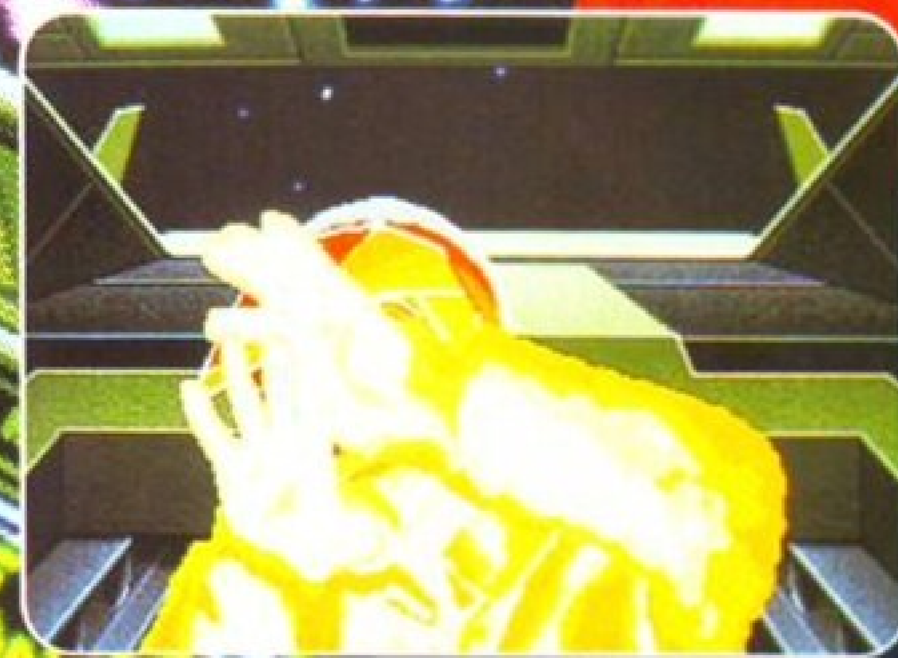



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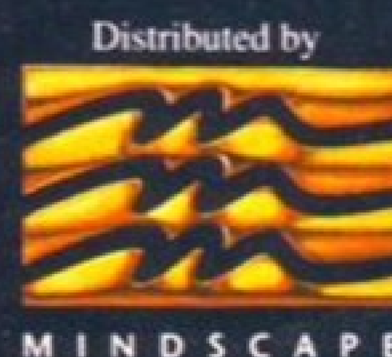
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Win £10,000 playing games

AS WE MENTIONED last month, the National Computer Games Championships Grand Final – now in association with Yorkshire TV's computer games related television show, Bad Influence – will be held at the Future Entertainment Show.

The total value for First and Second prizes is a monumental £14,000, that's £10,000 for the Winner, and £4,000 for second place – so if you win, you can stop playing games and buy a couple of Amiga 3000s instead.

The regional heats for the competition mean that wherever you are in the country you have a fair chance of having a crack at the big prizes.

The format of the competition is straightforward: in the heats, each competitor gets a two-minute blast on a soon-to-be-announced game (the clever betting here is no *Zool*). The four winners from each heat will be contacted after the event and will go on to the regional final on the Friday. Regional finals will be fought out by the four over two rounds. The first 15-minute round will be played on the Amiga, the winner of which will go on to the next round which must be fought out on an Amiga, a Sega Mega Drive and a Nintendo SuperNES. The player with the highest combined score will be the one who makes it to the televised London final.

If you make it this far, you are guaranteed at least an Amiga, a Mega Drive, an SNES and all the software used in the final. The exact format of the final is being kept a tight secret but with the TV interest and a mammoth prize, it should be a humdinger.



The longest journey starts with one step – so step into a Virgin Games Centre or Mega Store to start what could be a journey to Earls Court and £10,000.

DETAILS, DETAILS

The regional heats will be held at the following Virgin Megastores from Monday to Thursday between 2pm until 5pm. Finals will be held on the Friday on the following dates:

SCOTLAND:
from 12 October at Glasgow Union St, Falkirk and East Kilbride Games Centres. Final: Glasgow Argyle St.

NORTH WEST:
from 19 October at Stockport Games Centre, Manchester Megastore. Final: Manchester Megastore.

LONDON:
from 26 October at Bromley, Croydon, Guildford, Ilford, Kingston and 100 Oxford St Game Centre. Final: Marble Arch Megastore.

MIDLANDS:
from 26 October heats and finals at the Birmingham Megastore.

WEST:
from 26th October at Bristol Games Centre, Cardiff Megastore. Final: Cardiff Megastore.

NORTH EAST:
from 26th October at Newcastle Megastore, Gateshead Games Centre. Final Newcastle Megastore.

Remember that Future Publishing will pay all of the travel and accommodation expenses of the eight finalists and their guardians to the Grand Final at the Future Entertainment Show. So get down to your local Megastore.

Win a pair of tickets!



That's right, we have been given five highly prized pairs of VIP tickets to give away for the Future Entertainment Show. So if you want to have a great day out courtesy of ***Amiga Format***, all you have to do is answer one simple question; keep one day between November 5 to 8 free, and send your answer to: FESComp, ***Amiga Format***, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW. Be quick though, because the closing date for entries is Friday 16th October so that we can be sure of getting your tickets to you on time if you win. Winners will be notified by phone on that date, so you'll still have time to get tickets if you don't win.

OK, so here's the question: somewhere in this magazine you will find a list of all the magazines that Future Publishing er... publishes. If you can name them all, and you're first out of the hat, then we'll send one pair of tickets to you. If you can name all the mags that Future has *ever* published, we'll make that four tickets. Good luck.

Commodore

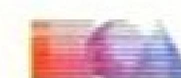
Rumours abound that Commodore will be previewing, if not actually launching, a brand new Amiga at the Future Entertianment Show. We know that they showed the A4000 at the World of Commodore show in Pasadena last month, so the new beast should be a real surprise and a very big deal.

Nintendo

The fight for the prime toy spot will be fought out between Nintendo and Sega at the show; at least the kids will have something to watch. The likelihood is that both the Japanese companies will be concentrating on CDs and Christmas games.

SEGA

More console fun as Sega pit *Sonic the Hedgehog* against *Mario*™ from Nintendo. We of course will stand back and watch as *Zool* puts paid to both of them. Aside from this, Sega will have many new games to show.



Electronic Arts have been incredibly busy. Not only have they recently bought US-based Origin (the company responsible for the *Ultima* series and the soon-to-be-released *Wing Commander*), they have also been developing away like crazy. Don't miss their forthcoming launches at the Show.



Amiga Format will be out in force at the Future Entertainment Show so make sure to come and meet us all. We will be available to answer as many of your questions as we possibly can. Anyone who buys a member of the ***AF*** team a beer will get their name printed in the January issue.

Exits
BAR
RESTAURANT
Commodore
Fire Exits
Exits
Earls Court 1
BAR & BUFFET
Exits
Cafe & Bar
Commodore
575
Micro-prose
Sega
Domark
Virgin Retail
Exits
Virtual Reality
Psygnosis
Acclaim
COMPETITION STAGE
VIDEO WALL
Earls Court 2
Exits
Electronic Arts
Exits
Gremlin
Nintendo
Philips
INFO
Entrance
Scale
10m



As *Zool*-fever begins to take a firm hold (leaving the console users looking on in awe) you can expect an impressive looking stand, a few competitions and maybe even news of *Zool 2*. Who knows? That's half the excitiment of going along to the show.

MICROPROSE

With *Formula One Grand Prix* tucked inside the new A600 bundle, we can surely expect a firm commitment from MicroProse to the Amiga. Their stand is normally festooned with flight-jacket wearing people desperate to give away T-shirts and other gear. Be there.

DOMARK

Domark will be on the Winter offensive yet again with upgrades, new releasess and a few more tricks ready to impress an unsuspecting public. One thing we know they'll be bringing is *AV8B Harrier Assualt* which, rumours have it, could be one of the better Amiga flight-sims.



The Liverpool-based software house have been beavering away at *Microcosm* for CDTV. This truly stunning game has already been shown in part to some members of the press, so you might expect to catch a glimpse at the next stage in Amiga gaming at the FES.

Acclaim

Although the company has done nothing for the Amiga since *Bart V the Space Aliens*, Acclaim could have a few tricks up their sleeves. However, it is more likely that they will be previewing and launching console-based games.

Audio Visual Research

AVR will be launching two new products for the Amiga at the show: Clarity 16 is a 16-bit sampler and will cost £150; VideoMaster costs £69.95 and combines audio and visual digitising. It also comes with a sequencer and video editing suite.

New sounds from New Dimensions

New Dimensions are currently working like crazy on the latest version of their sampling system, which should be finished in time for the show. *Technosound Turbo II* boasts a number of improvements over its predecessor, the most impressive of which is its ability to record samples direct to disk. It will cost £49.99, but upgrades will be available to existing users for £10.

Get there cheap

Network SouthEast

The organisers of the Future Entertainment Show have arranged with British Rail and Network South East a dual-ticketing deal for thousands of show goers.

The deal relates to all of the 942 Network South East stations, and means that travellers can get unlimited underground and bus travel, and the cost of the ticket to the show with an Off-Peak, One-Day Travelcard plus reduced admission to the show itself. The £1.05 reduction is not only good for the pocket, it also means that you can get in ahead of the crowd as you avoid the queues. So if you travel to the show by train you'll save time and money.

Meet Amiga Format



The *Amiga Format* team: meet us all at the show and ask some extremely taxing questions and we might give you a T-shirt.

If you couldn't get to last year's World of Commodore Show, now's your chance to get face-to-face with the ***Amiga Format*** team. The Future Entertainment Show, which is a massively extended version of the World of Commodore, will be the venue for a number of magazine forums in which you get to put your views, and hear those of the people behind these very pages.

You get to ask Damien why your letter wasn't printed. You can argue with Neil about game ratings. You can even chat with Pat about the more technical side of your machine. Everybody else will be there too. So come along with ideas about what you would like to see in the mag over the next year. We're more than pleased to meet you. Oh, and by the way, sister magazines *Amiga Shopper* and *Amiga Power* will also be there. Don't miss this chance to make yourself heard.

Virtually there

Experience the hip thing of the moment: Virtual Reality. At the FES, Zona will be offering you the opportunity to exist... somewhere else. Hunt out your opponent in a full-colour, three-dimensional, 360-degree world.

Bitcon



You've heard all the PC hype of late. Now see the Amiga beat the reality.

A PC emulator for the A600? Who said the machine was unexpandable? Bitcon, UK agents for Dutch-based KCS, will be showing for the first time a PC emulator for the Amiga 600.

A high-density twin floppy drive will be the other big attraction on the stand, able to read and write not only with Amiga but also PC disks when used in conjunction with the PC emulator.

HARD BENEFITS!

Just because you have seen the games-laden posters and have read about the World Wrestling Federation beefcakes appearing at the Future Entertainment Show, don't be fooled into thinking that it's not going to be pulling its weight with the serious stuff.

The Future Entertainment Show will be about the whole world of Commodore and Amiga computers.

Companies of the magnitude of Great Valley Products (GVP), HB Marketing, Nimbus and Power Computing will all be in attendance. This means that range after range of quality hardware and software - from scanners to hard drives, graphics to word processors, videos to accelerators – will be there for the taking.

Many of the companies appearing at the Show will also be putting on special show deals as well.

CD-i versus CDTV

This is your chance to see Philips CD-I system for yourself. At the Future Entertainment Show you will have the chance to see whether, at £599, the CD-I 205 player represents stiff competition for Commodore's CDTV system.

Both use CDs to enable the user to manipulate audio, text, graphics. Both have invested a great deal of time, money and faith in the development of their respective systems over the last few years. With Philips arriving this year amongst speculation that the huge Sony Corp will be backing it, CDTV faces its first real challenge. So decide for yourself who the winner should be.

Get tickets now and get them cheap

That's right, not only can you jump the queues that will be winding around Earls Court, you can also get them at a discount if you apply early. All you need to do is call:

051-356 5085

in order to save £1.05 and a great deal of your valuable time, all of which you will need to get round the show. Using the hotline number, you only spend £5.95 (adult) or £3.95 (children).

Great products from the Valley?

Great Valley Products have just announced a whole barrow-load of new hardware and software, making their UK distributors Silica very happy in the process. The news represents the largest new product announcement from GVP for almost two years.

Products that GVP will inevitably be showing at the FES include: G-LOCK is a new high-quality genlock system which goes on sale in October for around £300. *CineMorph* is GVP's new 24-bit morphing package, created by the same team which made the IV24 Amiga graphics card. *CineMorph* also hits the streets in October, priced at around £100.

I/O Expander is a new plug-in card for the A1500, A2000 and A3000 which provides two high-speed serial ports and a parallel port. It is available now and is priced £149 inc VAT. GVP are now supplying the HD8+ hard-drive unit - without a hard-drive fitted. The HD8+ system, which features an Amiga-style casing, high-speed GVP controller hardware and a RAM expansion slot, is now available in its 'empty' form for £199. GVP move up a gear with their fastest G-FORCE Amiga accelerator yet, a 33Mhz 68040 unit for the A1500 and A2000. It is available now, priced £1699.

Games News

The usual Christmas rush is about to start, when software houses desperately try to meet their all-important deadlines. Neil Jackson looks at the potential hits and misses we can expect to find weighing down our seasonal stockings.



Troddlers: more little creatures to chase around.

Storm (Sales Curve)

Troddlers is the next game we're likely to see from Storm, and it's another *Lemmings* style guide-the-little-creatures-around-the-platforms affair. Due in early November, *Troddlers* features 175 levels, 25 are head-to-head, 50 are two-player team games, leaving 100 for solitary players. That should keep you occupied.



Road Rash: on track for early December from EA.

Electronic Arts

What do you get if you cross a racing game with a beat-'em-up? *Road Rash*: EA's new mix of motorcycle mayhem and macho posturing. It's basically a *Super HangOn* clone, except that you can punch and kick bikers off their machines. The aim is to win, so you can buy bits for your bike, and keep on winning.



Don your detective cap in *Daughter of Serpents*.

Millennium

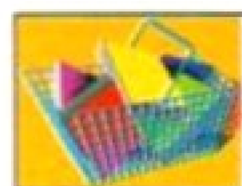
Daughter of Serpents, Millennium's break into the world of graphic adventures is to be released next March. It's being written by Eldritch the Cat and features some beautiful backgrounds and scenery from 1930s Egypt. Rather like the classic Agatha Christie stories, it's a tale of intrigue, excitement and detective work. Depending on the role you elect to play, different aspects of the story unfold, making the plot seem slightly different every time.

Coktel Vision

Originally earmarked for a May release, *Bargon Attack* is now expected to be with us in time for Christmas. Based on a cartoon strip from a French computer magazine, *Bargon Attack* takes the form of a graphical adventure, but from what we've seen, it's not a patch on *Monkey Island 2*.

UBI Soft

Another game out at Christmas is *BC Kid* from UBI Soft. It's a head-butting, jumping, platformy-rompy-type game where you scoff chilli peppers and run around like a thing possessed. It features crazy prehistoric arcade action (you climb walls using your teeth) and it looks like a cross between *Zool* and *New Zealand Story*.



Budget News

So you're saving all your money up for Christmas? Why bother – we're all going to be completely broke by then anyway. Forget any Ebenezer tendencies you might be trying to nurture and splash out a tenner on a budget game or two instead. At least you can keep on playing until they cut the power off! Here's what's cooking in the cheapy department:

Codemasters – 0926 814132
Crystal Kingdom Dizzy – £19.99 (compilation)
Bignose the Caveman – £7.99
Slicks – £TBA
Super All-Stars – £24.99 (compilation)

Hit Squad – 061-832 6633
The Duel (Test Drive 2) – £7.99
Pictionary – £7.99
Bart vs the Space Mutants – £7.99
Terminator 2 – £7.99
Pit-Fighter – £7.99
Smash TV – £7.99
WWF Wrestlemania – £7.99
Hudson Hawk – £7.99

Kixx – 021-625 3366
Super Monaco GP – £9.99
Flimbo's Quest – £9.99
Carrier Command – £9.99

Zeppelin – 091-385 7755
Blade Warrior – £7.99
Frankenstein – £7.99
Graeme Souness Vector Soccer – £7.99
International Tennis – £7.99
Doc Croc's Excellent Adventures – £7.99
Neighbours – £7.99
International Truck Racing – £7.99
Santa's Christmas Capers – £7.99
International 5-a-side Football – £7.99

FIGHT THE WHOLE OF EUROPE



Air Warrior fans can now keep their 'phone bills to a minimum thanks to a new deal worked out between On-Line Entertainment and BT.

Air Warrior, the multi-player flight simulator played via a telephone, is now expanding its coverage to the whole of the European continent. Game operators, On-Line Entertainment, have now negotiated a deal with BT which enables the game to be played over BT's Tymnet computer network.

This means that potential players no longer need to build up huge phone bills, since they can access the On-Line computer from their local Tymnet node. Players from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, France, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Norway, Spain and Switzerland can take part for the cost of a local call and their On-Line subscription.

UK Users of *Air Warrior* aren't left off the European list of those who can benefit from reduced call costs. As a result of the connection to the European network, On-Line can now be accessed via BT's X-25 network, Dialplus. This enables users to connect to London for the price of a call to their nearest Dialplus node, and you'll find these in 102 British cities.

To find out more about *Air Warrior* and other On-Line games, contact Clem Chambers on 081-558 6114. The main London node for On-Line can be reached on 081-539 6763, or use the On-Line password on your local BT Dialplus node.

Stop Press – On-line Entertainment have just announced that they are to add a new multi-player game, *Islands of Kesmai*, to their range. This game was previously only available via CompuServe in the USA.

OCEAN GET STEAMED UP



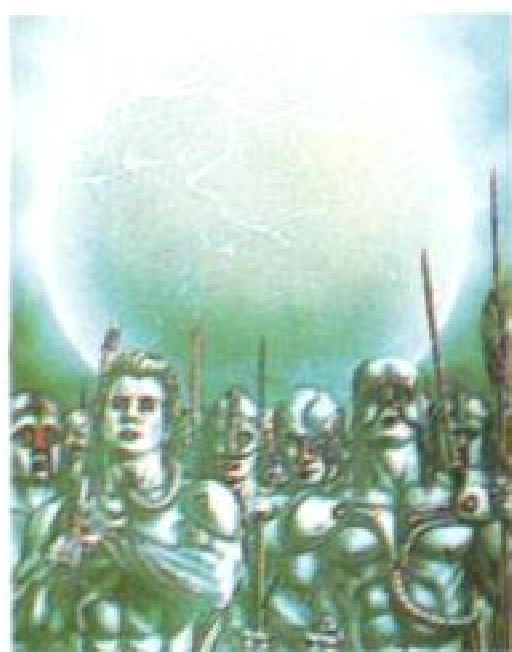
A-Train: let your brain take the strain. Sid Meier's classic comes to the Amiga.

Ocean have a stack of releases planned for the next few months, but their release dates are not yet definite. The first we're likely to see is *A-Train*, a Maxis game which combines elements of their *Sim City* with MicroProse's *Railroad Tycoon*.

But Ocean's hottest title looks set to be *Sleepwalker*. It's hot because Ocean have secured a tie-in with those humorous fund-raisers Comic Relief, and they will be donating a chunk of the profits to next year's Red Nose Appeal. Stephen Fry and Lenny Henry are working on the game and preparing to host a nation-wide competition for March '93.

Also planned is *Inferno* – the sequel to Ocean's hit flight sim, *Retaliator*. Under development by DID, it is due in the Spring. DID are also working on *Odyssey*, the sequel to *Epic*, and this time they're putting in some gameplay as well as pretty graphics. Perhaps that's why it's not expected until June.

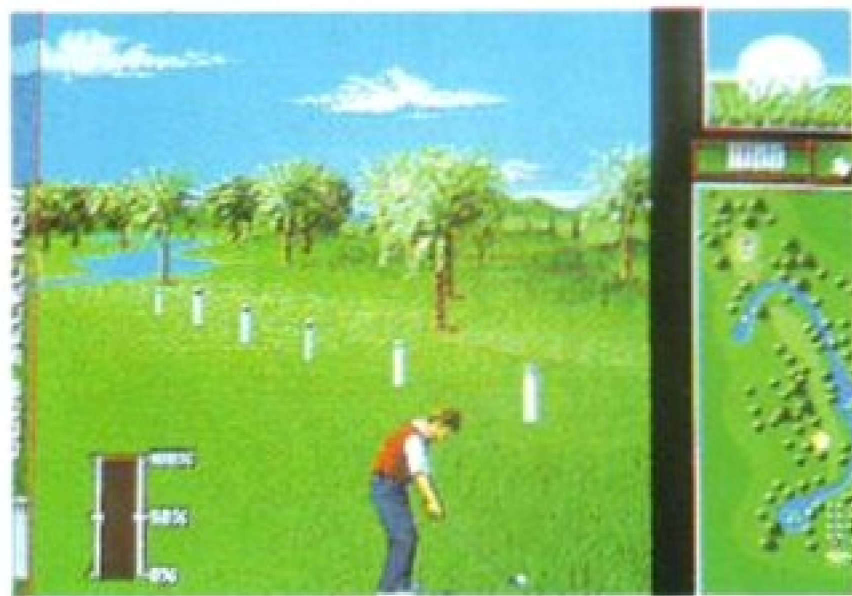
Meanwhile, Ocean are busy securing film and TV rights for next year. They're currently designing games for *Lethal Weapon*, *Cool World*, a sequel to *The Addams Family* called *Scavenger Hunt*, and *WWF 2*, a new World Wrestling Foundation game.


Will *Dominium* have that certain je ne sais quoi?

Microids

A tad too late for the Olympics, Microids announce *Super Sports Challenge*, a fairly typical joystick-waggling game which features sprinting, throwing, jumping and swimming events. It should be with us in a matter of days.

Microids are also working on a strategy war-game called *Dominium* which promises a wealth of *Battle Isles*-style head-to-head action with a neat sci-fi plot and some laughable French-to-English translations. Wait until November, and you might be in for a surprise.


Nick Faldo's offers personal tution for beginners.

Grandslam

Nick Faldo's Championship Golf is due from Grandslam later this month. The programmers, Arc Developments, have looked at top-selling golf titles like *PGA Tour* and *Links*, to see where they can be improved. As a result *Nick Faldo's* has several features which make playing simpler, including a quick tuition round, where Faldo himself explains how to play.

Christmas Grandslam launches are *Myra The Legend*, a 150-level maze game, and *Realms of Darkness*, a 3D, isometric role-playing game with a distinctly *Populous* feel.


Get your reflexes ready for *Pinball Fantasies*.

21st Century Entertainment

The current favourite in the *Amiga Format* office is 21st Century's storming pinball game, *Pinball Dreams*, so we're pleased there's going to be a sequel – *Pinball Fantasies*. Developed by the same team, it features four even bigger tables with multiple flippers and hundreds of scoring options. It's due in the next few months and it's bound to be a belter.


The Chaos Engine: check out the demo!

Mindscape/Renegade

Mindscape are due to release Renegade's *The Chaos Engine* during November, and if the initial demos are anything to go by, it could be yet another Bitmap Brothers classic. It's a crazy idea, based on a Victorian machine which goes bonkers, disrupting the space/time continuum in true HG Wells fashion. Featuring two-player simultaneous gameplay and sampled speech and plenty of weird arcade action, *The Chaos Engine* is (sadly) destined only for one megabyte Amigas.

Remember the C64? Then you may remember the classic shoot-'em-up *Uridium*, by Andrew Braybrook. Renegade have managed to talk him into doing a sequel for the Amiga. *Uridium 2* should be winging into the shops just after Christmas.

Zeppelin

After releasing their first full-price game *Match of the Day* (reviewed on Page 107), Zeppelin are preparing their next one. *Sink or Swim* is a madcap *Lemmings*-style game where you have to prevent lots of little fluffy creatures from drowning. Look out for this one during November – it's sure to be a lot of fun.



Patriotic games abound with *Indy*.

US Gold

US Gold have secured the licence to the famous Scrabble board-game, which is just underway on the Amiga. They've also arranged to distribute two Indiana Jones games from LucasArts: *Indy and the Fate of Atlantis* (which uses the *Monkey Island* SCUMM system) and the *Indy Action game* (created by Birmingham developers ATD).

US Gold are also preparing to distribute *Crusaders of the Dark Savant*, the sequel to *Sir Tech's Bane of the Cosmic Forge*, and *Free DC*, a bizarre human-zoo game created by Kellyn Beck, the California Raisins animator.

Also in the pipeline is *Pirates of Realmspace*, a Spelljammer game boasting 50 hours of Dungeons and Dragons gameplay. But best of all is *Legends of Valour*, the first scrolling 3D role-playing game for the Amiga which makes *Dungeon Master* look archaic. See this month's Coverdisk for a demo of it.

Top 30 Amiga Full Price Games Chart

1(1)	■	**Sensible Soccer** Renegade/Mindscape/Sensible Software	FG91%
2(14)	▲	**Civilization** MicroProse	FG94%
3(4)	▲	**Monkey Island 2** US Gold/Lucasfilm	FG95%
4(6)	▲	**Formula One Grand Prix** MicroProse	FG92%
5(2)	▼	**Espana The Games** Ocean	43%
6(13)	▲	**Crazy Cars 3** Titus	FG93%
7(5)	▼	**Fire and Ice** Renegade/Mindscape	89%
8(-)	New	**Premiere** Renegade/Mindscape	89%
9(7)	▼	**Lure of the Temptress** Virgin/Revolution	FG92%
10(17)	▲	**Championship Manager** Domark	41%
11(9)	▼	**Graham Taylor's Soccer Challenge** Krisalis	82%
12(22)	▲	**Eye of the Beholder 2** US Gold/SSI	FG91%
13(11)	▼	**Striker** Rage Software	FG93%
14(18)	▲	**The Manager** US Gold/Software 2000	79%
15(10)	Re-entry	**The Perfect General** Ubisoft	82%
16(12)	▼	**Jaguar XJ220** Core Design	79%
17(19)	▲	**John Madden American Football** Electronic Arts	FG94%
18(14)	▼	**Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker** Virgin	FG91%
19(10)	▼	**Project X** Team 17	75%
20(-)	New	**Ashes of Empire** Mirage	85%
21(8)	▼	**Epic** Ocean	34%
22(26)	▲	**Easy AMOS** Europress Software	92%
23(-)	New	**Mega Sports** US Gold	Compilation
24(-)	New	**Pinball Dreams** 21st Century Entertainment	84%
25(25)	■	**The Addams Family** Ocean	78%
26(16)	▼	**PGA Tour+** Electronic Arts	Compilation
27(-)	New	**BBC's Match of the Day** Zeppelin Premier	56%
28(-)	New	**Knights of the Sky** Microprose	88%
29(-)	New	**Mini Office** Europress Software	84%
30(-)	Re-entry	**European Football Championship** Domark	Review next issue

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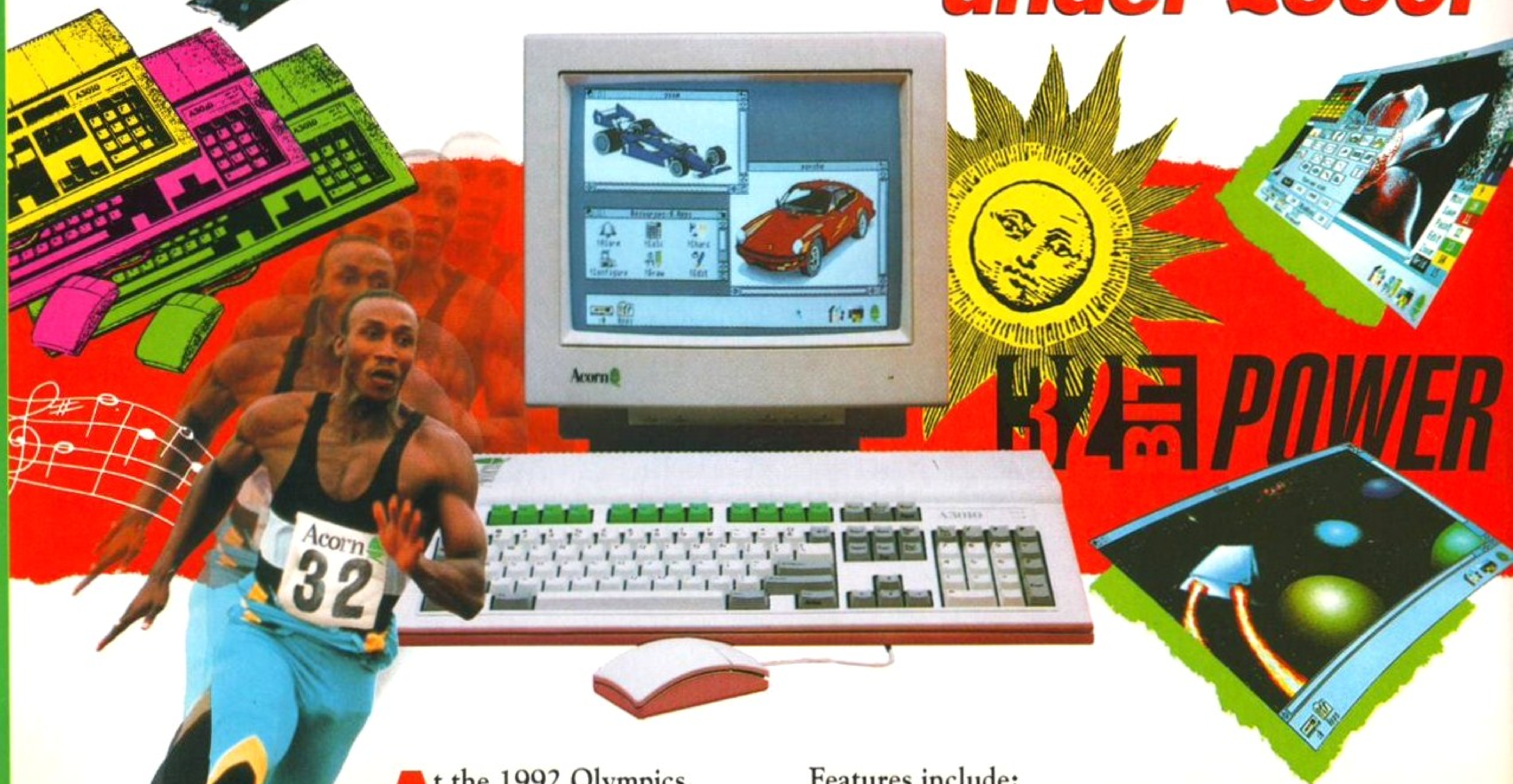
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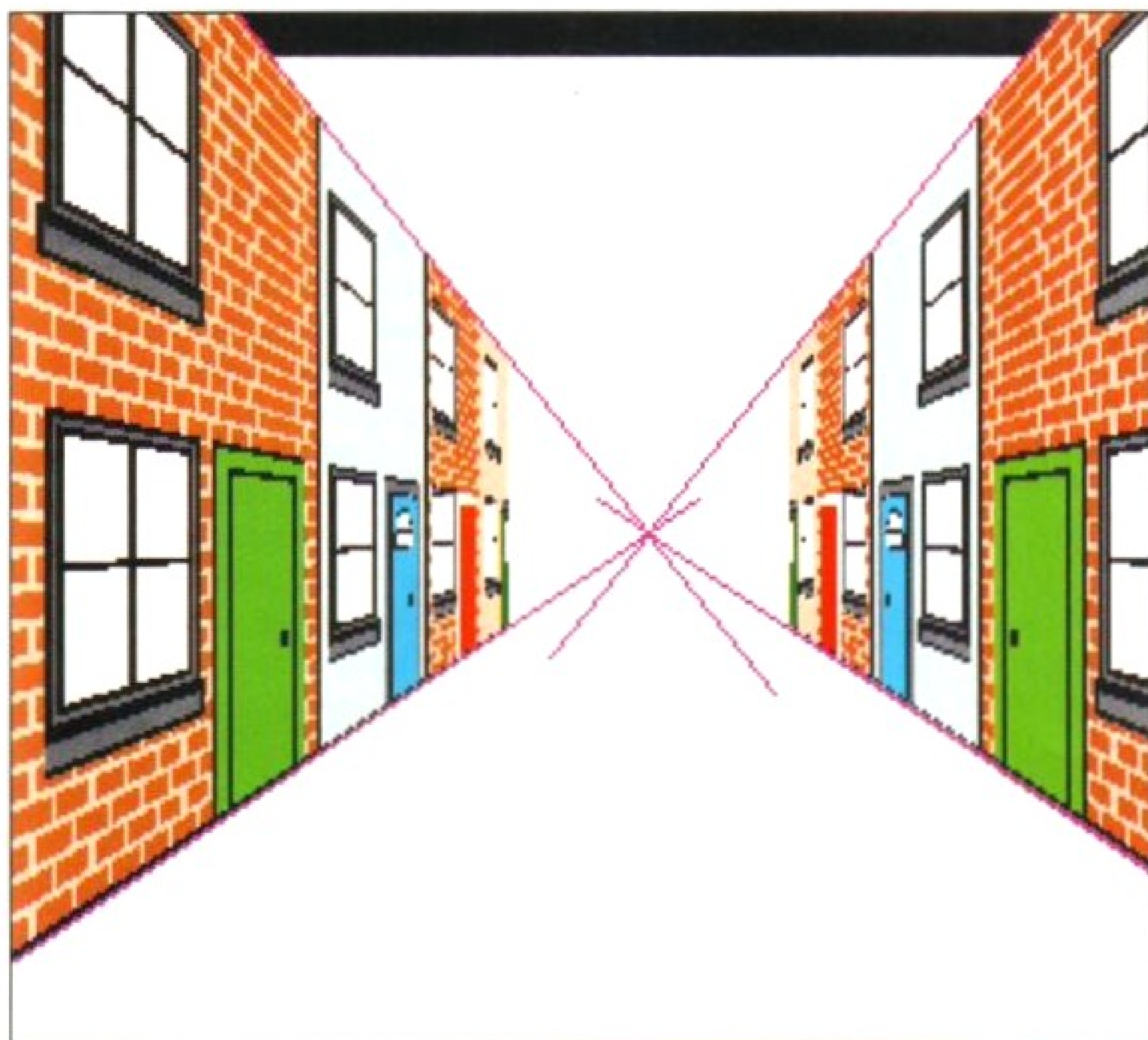
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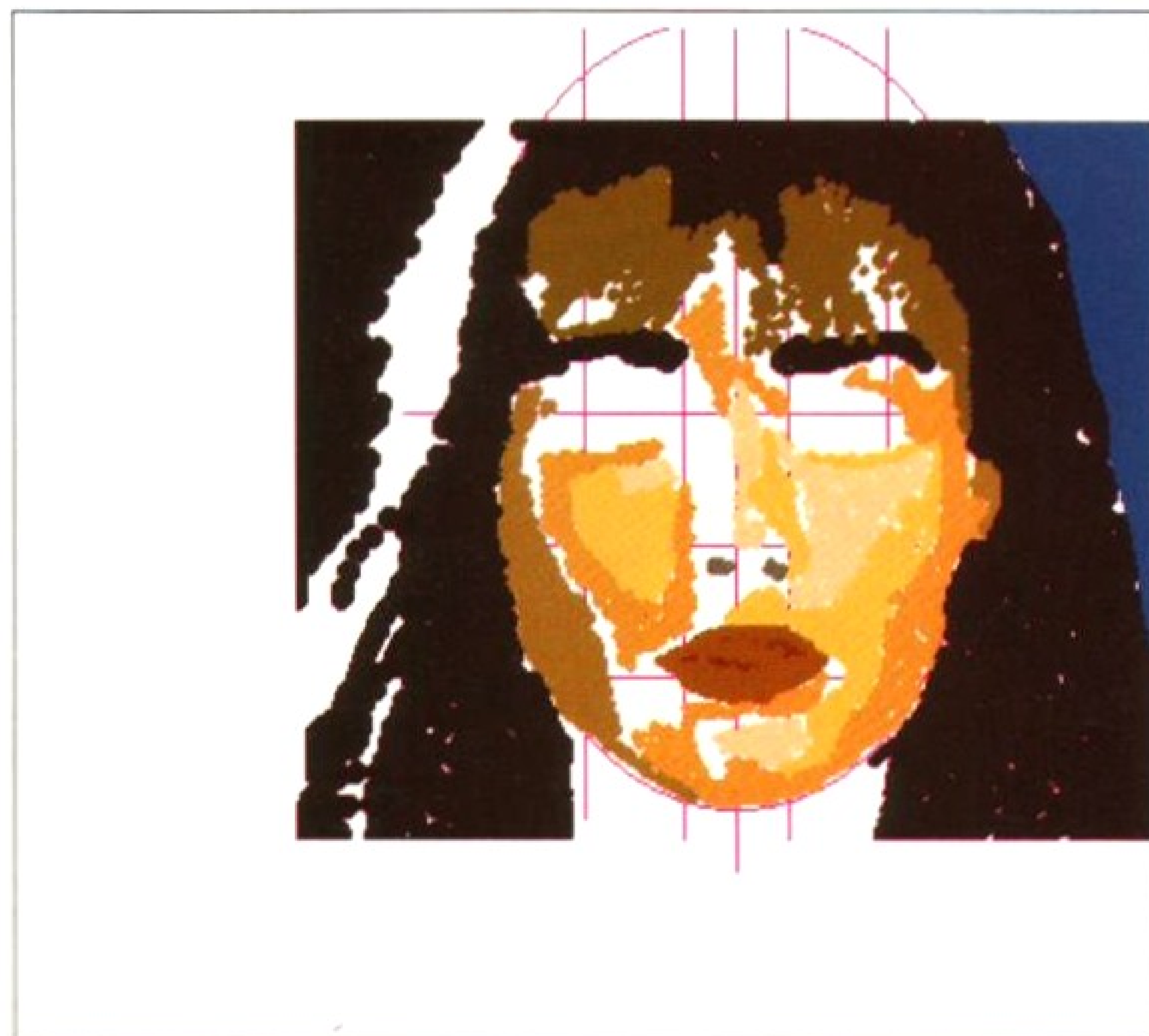
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Getting the most from Deluxe Paint

Looking at the latest games with their flash graphics and superb artwork, you may well be inspired to actually try to create your own digital masterpieces. Fortunately, you have the tools right at your fingertips to achieve this, in the shape of Deluxe Paint III. However, you need to know how to use it to get the optimum results. **Andrew Nuttall**, **Asam Ahmad** and **Brian Larkman** get together with the best designers from Domark, Psygnosis and Bullfrog to open up the world of Deluxe Paint and give you some useful hints and helpful tips to enable even the most inexperienced novice pixel artist to get into the swing of things and start creating the Amiga equivalent of the Mona Lisa.





Getting into perspective

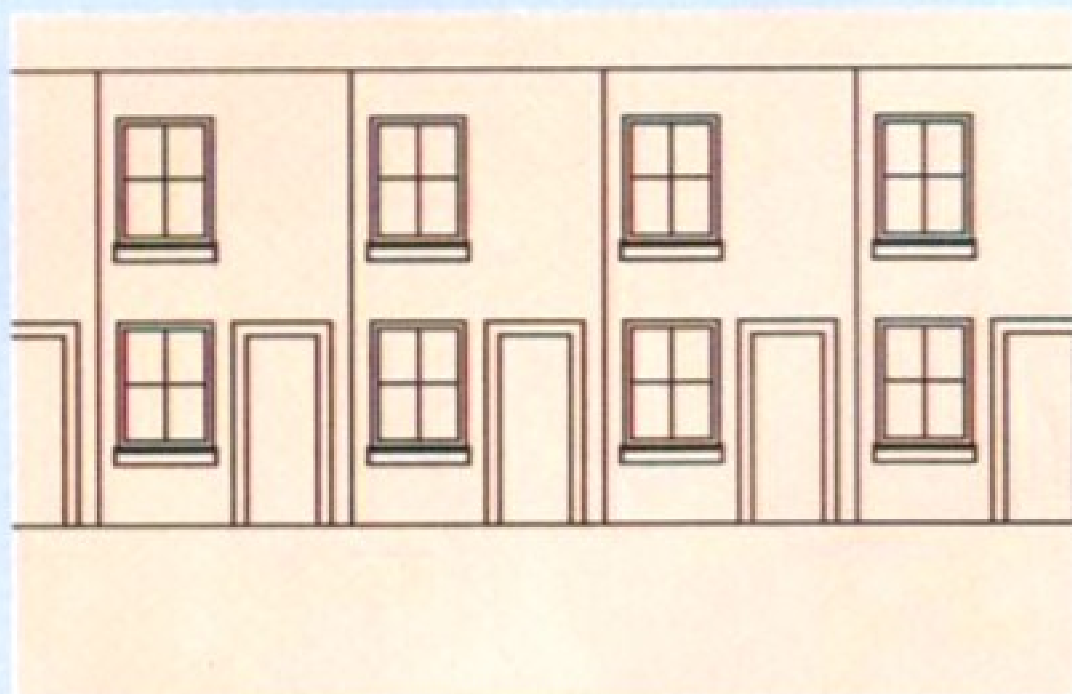
However much you read the manual and follow our range of hints and tips there is nothing like a bit of good ol' practice to learn how to use *Deluxe Paint III*.

To help you use the excellent features of *DPaint*, we've put together a couple of step-by-step tutorials which you can follow to create some great piccies. You don't have to follow them to the letter, of course – if you feel like doing a range of shops instead of houses, or drawing a man instead of a woman, then do it!

Right then, the first picture we're going to draw is a street scene. To do this, we're going to make use of many important features of *DPaint*, including brush fills and perspective.

Please note: This demonstration makes use of the Perspective feature of *DPaint III*, which relies heavily on the A500's keypad for operation, and hence some A600 users might not be able to complete the picture. However, Electronic Arts and Commodore have now solved this problem with a 'patch' that remaps the necessary keys, so if you have an A600 and an older version of *Deluxe Paint* then get in touch with them on 0753 549442.

Anyway, put your apron on, get your funny floppy hat out of the closet, load up *DPaint III* and begin...



The first thing we're going to do is draw one side of the street, as it would be viewed from the opposite side. Set the background to white by clicking the right button on palette colour white, and set the foreground colour to black by clicking the left button on black. Remember to remove the menu while you're drawing – press F10 to switch it on or off.

Draw the basic outline of a house using the line tool, then add some windows and doors. Don't add the roof or anything yet, just do the main front wall. Pick it all up as a brush by clicking on the brush icon and dragging the box around the house shape, then draw a few of them side by side. Here's one we prepared earlier...



Access the colour palette by pressing P, and create some bricks and mortar colours (making sure you leave black-and-white colours intact). Swap to the other drawing screen by pressing J, draw a brick pattern, and pick it up using the brush tool. Click the right mouse button on the fill icon to access the Fill Type menu, and click on 'From brush'. This creates a fill type using the selected brush pattern.

Swap to the original screen by pressing J again, and click the left button on the fill icon. Now click the left button on a wall of a house, and the whole front wall will be filled with the brick pattern! If you really want to make a version of Coronation Street then click on all of the walls. However, for this article we've decided to use the bricks sparingly, and create a painted effect on the other houses. Switch back to ordinary brush mode by clicking the right button on Fill again, and selecting the Solid option.

And now, the part where *DPaint* comes into its own. Using the Perspective option from the menu, we are going to manipulate the image so that it looks '3D'.



Pick up the whole image as a brush, then clear the screen and go to 'Do Perspective' on the Effect menu. You should now use keys 4 and 5 on the keypad to rotate the brush about the vertical axis. Move the mouse around to size and position the brush as you rotate it. If you're not happy with the results, just press 6 on the keypad to return to zero rotation. When it's the right size, click the left button to position it.



Now that's done, draw two lines along each edge of the image in a colour that won't be used in the final drawing (eg magenta).

Pick up the whole caboodle as a brush again, then go to 'Flip Horiz' on the Brush menu. This will mirror your brush along the horizontal axis. Now move the brush around until all the magenta guidelines match up, then click the left mouse button. The point where all these guidelines cross is called the 'Vanishing Point', and is the part of the screen where all perspective lines cross.

Continued on Page 36

DESPITE ALL THE 24-bit 3D rendering and image-processing programs that have arrived recently, basic bitmap painting is by far the most popular form of graphics production. And *Deluxe Paint III* from Electronic Arts is the most widely used program.

Thirty-two-colour painting in lo-res is by no means ideal, but starting with these limitations means that you can concentrate your attention on learning the basics.

The skills you develop here are vital if you are going to move on to more sophisticated and complex HAM (Hold And Modify) and 24-bit 'true colour' paint programs. However often you use *Deluxe Paint*, there are always more tricks to be learned.

And, over the years, a range of tips and tricks have been developed by experienced users to get the most out of the system. We thought it was about time for us to share them with you: so here are the best of the bunch...

Because we've covered a wide range of tips, we've split them into three sections, *Beginners*, *Half-Decent* and *Advanced*. We have also created two special walk-through demonstrations of using the most important features of *Deluxe Paint*.

Beginners

BEFORE YOU START, SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Read the manual: if you never read any other manual, try to work your way through this one and do all of the tutorials. The *DPaint* manuals are particularly good for beginners. You will be amazed at what you learn and at how useful this knowledge will be as and when you come to use other paint programs, Amiga or otherwise.
- Use keyboard shortcuts: right from the start, familiarise yourself with the keyboard as well as the mouse. Use the keyboard equivalents (also known as 'shortcuts') as often as possible, and you will not only draw more quickly but you will find it easier to access some of the features.
- Save your work: make sure you have several blank formatted disks handy, and save your work frequently. There is nothing more frustrating than losing two hours of hard graft when you accidentally kick the off switch.



Venus, from the *DPaint* art disks, is a good example of a 32-colour lo-res picture.

- Use the Art disks: it's always best to start off with someone else's pictures, play around with them and modify them using all the tools available, just to get confidence.

GENERAL DRAWING TIPS

- Sketch the drawing first: if you're drawing a freehand picture, divide the screen into working areas, and use the Line or the Dotted Fill tools to sketch the main outlines of your picture in roughly.
- Guidelines: use a falsely bright colour for guidelines, and remove it later with Stencil (lock all the other colours and clear) or Fill (see below).
- Mouse buttons: remember that left button draws in foreground colour, right button draws in background colour.
- Use the magnify facility: never attempt to draw detail when in full-screen mode, as it's very easy to make a mistake.



This car, taken from the game *Lotus III*, is almost perfectly symmetrical about the vertical axis.

- Symmetry: if you can see horizontal or vertical symmetry in an object, just draw one half, pick it up as a brush, press x or y to flip the brush horizontally or vertically then paste it down next to the original. Also, try drawing the whole thing freehand and then choose the best half to flip.
- Freehand sketching: drawing with a mouse is a bit like drawing with a child's crayon, pretty crude. The Freehand tool is OK for rough sketches but if you want to make an accurate, controlled line use the Unfilled Polygon tool. A series of short straight lines can even make a good curve.
- Basic images: use the Regular Polygon tools to form the basics of complex images, using the sketch colour as above. For example, for a face use ellipses (squashed circles) to create the head, eyes, mouth, cheeks, ears and nose. Over this formal structure draw the actual form, then remove the guide lines.
- Straight lines: bitmapped images are composed of square dots and these always produce 'stepped' edges (also called 'jaggies') – so even a straight line at an angle can look jagged. Some angles can be much rougher than others so always look carefully at the lines as you draw them. A slight adjustment can sometimes make a great improvement.
- Use the full screen: you can toggle the menu on or off using the F10 key, thus making the screen significantly larger, but you would be surprised how many people don't. Alternatively, you can scroll around the full screen with the main menu switched on by using the cursor keys.
- Second drawing screen: *DPaint* has a second screen which is held in memory at all times, and is particularly useful as a 'doodle' screen where you can prepare brushes for use. Toggle between screens by using J.
- Get used to using the stencil: this is an extremely useful facility that enables you to 'lock' certain colours from the palette so that they can't be erased.

For instance, to change all red pixels on the screen to blue pixels, select 'Make Stencil' from the Effect menu, click on Clear, then select the red colour either by clicking on the palette or on the relevant point on your picture. Click on Invert to select all colours except red, then click on Make. Select blue as the background colour, then click on the clear icon. Magically, all the red will turn to blue. Remove the Stencil facility by pressing the apostrophe key.

COLOUR PALETTE

- Try not to change the palette too much at first: as you progress with digital painting you will find that getting the palette set up correctly for smooth gradients is the most complicated bit. To begin with try to always use the default palette. If you need more colours use Extra HalfBrite (EHB for short – lo-res with 64 colours) which is also good for drawing shadows.
- If you have to change the palette, try to be organised. Keep similar colours together. The first two colours in the left row are the initial background and foreground – if you change these make sure they contrast or you won't be able to see the menu!
- Optimise your palette: if you are in 32-colour mode, and you've only used 16 colours or less, you can tidy up your palette by accessing the 'Screen Format' option from the Picture menu, and changing to 16 colours. The program will take all the used colours and arrange them into the new palette, so if you go back to 32-colour mode you will find that there are at least 16 unused colours on the right hand side of the palette.

This trick is particularly useful when creating a range of colours for use in the Blend and Shade options.

BRUSHES

- Copy and Cut: picking up areas of the screen is easy with the Brush Selector. Remember that left button copies the area and right button cuts it.
- Object Recycling: when you have a large number of similar objects to produce – trees in a wood, faces in a crowd, stones in a wall – draw one and recycle it. A slight change of size or rotation can introduce enough imperfection to make quite different images; this effect can be further enhanced by flipping horizontally and/or by changing colours. With solid objects, however, remember to take light direction into consideration!
- Gridlock: whenever you are working with a subject needing precise alignment remember to use the Gridlock. This also makes it easier to line up repeated patterns.

For example, a building with many similar windows will retain its symmetry; drawers in furniture will line up, so will keys on a keyboard, rivets on a boat, or pictures in an exhibition. Hold down the SHIFT key to lock the cursor in one axis, making things easy when positioning items in a line.

Face to face

Even in computer painting, it is often necessary to be able to draw people. Most artists find the human body the most difficult and time consuming subject they draw. While the body is obviously made up of many parts, the most difficult part to draw is without a doubt the head.

For this demonstration, we are going to show how we drew the girl's face for this month's cover, but first we shall go over the basics of face and head drawing?

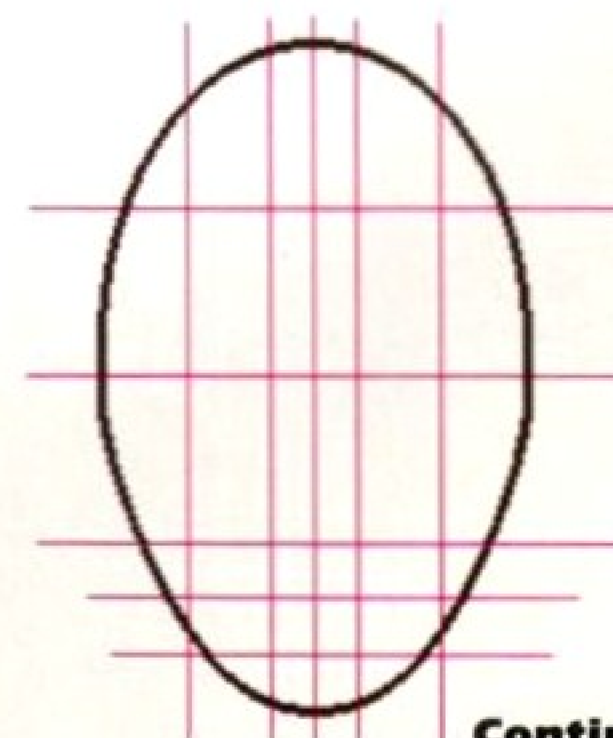
Right, think of an ordinary face. What is it made up of? Well skin, obviously, but the main features are two eyes, a nose and a mouth. Most children realise this, and so generally come up with something like this...



It's got the features all right, but it's not very convincing, is it? For a start, a real person's nose is a triangular shape, and their eyes are generally positioned just above the middle of their face. OK, let's have another go. First choose a dark shade to paint with (such as black), then draw an egg shape.



Now choose a wacky and way out colour like bright pink, then draw a vertical line down the middle of the oval shape. Divide the line into four equal parts, then divide the bottom section into three parts. Lastly, divide the middle horizontal line into five parts, and you should have something like this.



Continued on Page 37



DPainting with the pros

Who better to ask about getting the most out of DPaint than the people who use it to create games every day of the week...

Paul McLaughlin of Bullfrog



PAUL WAS A draftsman before he started at Bullfrog, and prior to this he had never even used *DPaint*. Now, though, after gaining loads of experience with the 'Frogs, he is bursting with advice for those who are still novices.

Paul believes that creating pictures is all about ideas: "Before I start a picture I formulate the concept in my head and I do some illustrations on paper before going near a computer." Paul explains the reason behind this thinking: "The idea is to experiment with your picture to see if it works using the palette you are restricted to (when transferring it to *DPaint*) which, with games graphics, is only 16 colours, because you have to allow for sprites.

"The next stage is to produce rough blocks of colour in proportion to your paper sketches on screen, filling in the areas of colour as you need and then tidying up the picture to see how it translates on screen. The process of adding detail is a little premature at this stage, because the layout of the picture has to look right before you can start on the final stages. A good tip here is to horizontally flip the picture, and compare it with the paper version before finalising it to make sure all your perspectives, shapes and sizes look right. You can often find inaccuracies by this simple method of viewing the picture almost through a mirror."

"I had never even used *DPaint* before I came to Bullfrog." – Paul McLaughlin

If you want to check the perspective and ellipses of a picture (the top pic for example) then flip it horizontally to make sure. It works for Paul every time.

The bottom picture shows a striking scene that was planned for *Populous II*. The whole picture is made from two colours: red and blue, with many tones of each for highlights.





Paul doesn't use a lot of functions on DPaint, because the computer, obviously, doesn't know what is aesthetically pleasing. "For example, the perspective function, good as it is, is a little too accurate and doesn't relay as much realism as a hand-drawn scene", at least in Paul's mind. Stencil, however, he reckons is "...one of the best tools on the package. Anybody who is seriously considering using *DPaint* must know how to pick up brushes leaving some colours behind, and alos how to clean up images. It enables you to do what is impossible on paper."

For Bullfrog games, like *Populous*, Paul has to use a relatively standard palette, with warm shades of greys and greens. But when doing intro screens, and if there is enough memory, Paul uses up to 32 colours and builds up his palette using four or five basic colours with up to four additional shades of each.

This enables smoothing and makes it easier to pick out detail in your picture as Paul explains: "When choosing a palette, you normally know what tone the picture is going to take, so if it has a blue tone choose a few shades of blue, plus a complimentary colour such as orange, to pick out highlights and backlights in the picture. It is wise to have black in the palette, and leave as much of the palette blank when you start, and add tones as you need them. If you are hoping to go into the industry you'll find you will be restricted to 16-colour palettes most of the time, so try not painting in EHB or 32-colour screens."

Another useful tip Paul has to help you save memory, as well as making your picture more dramatic, is to use a lot of shadow and high-contrast effects where images are literally pulled out from the background: "By leaving a lot of the picture black, and using dark shades graduating into highlights, you can produce some very vivid images which are very atmospheric. This way you can also get away with a low-colour palette, especially if you use an almost-mono approach to a screen, say black and blue, but with another complimentary colour to add extra highlights."

Does Paul sometimes get carried away with all the functions in *DPaint*? "Yes, I do get tempted to use all the features in every picture. But you can create a picture using dithered fills, perspective, the works, but it will show. The freehand and the brush tools are powerful enough and, for most instances they will be adequate for creating your image. Use the special functions sparingly, for small areas where necessary. When creating animations also remember that it is the changes in the picture that take up the memory, so don't try and move everything in every frame."

Have you any final tips that you've gleaned from your experience, professionally with *DPaint*? "Yes, don't be afraid to make lots of revisions to a picture. You will find that a lot of the time a picture will turn out crap using the effects you have used, so it is just a case of trying again. It is useful to start work on a picture by creating a background first and then adding objects on to the screen as needed. This way you can set the atmosphere of the picture which can help in later stages when drawing other parts in a similar style.

"Don't assume either that because a picture looks right to you that it is right. Get the opinion of someone else about how it looks, and whether it could be improved. You'll find that because you are used to looking at your picture, you might miss some detail."

Paul also has some time-saving advice: "All the major tools have got keyboard short cuts and, though there is an icon strip, it can be time consuming using your all the time, especially if you are doing some pixel-perfect editing." Thanks Paul.

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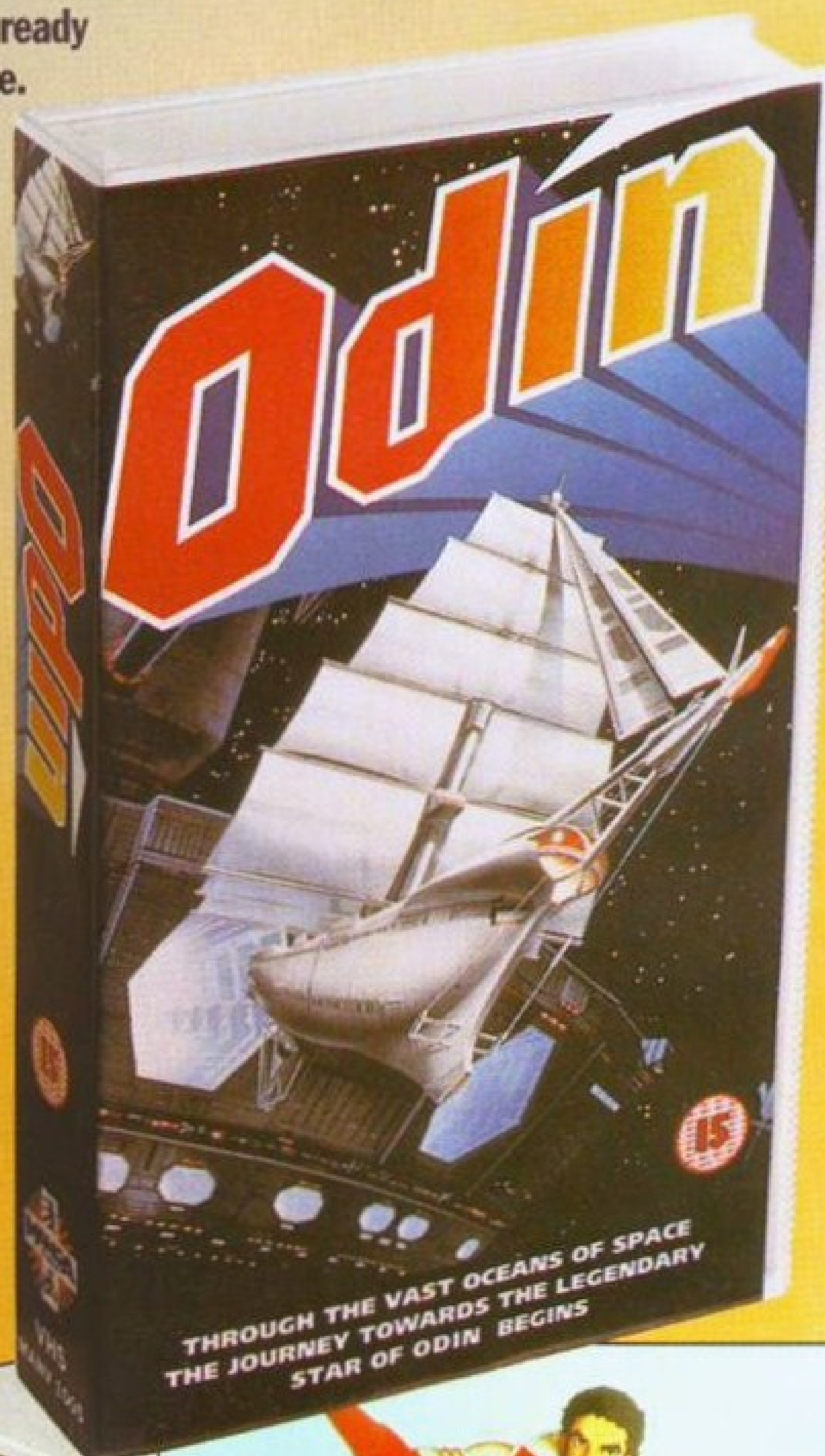
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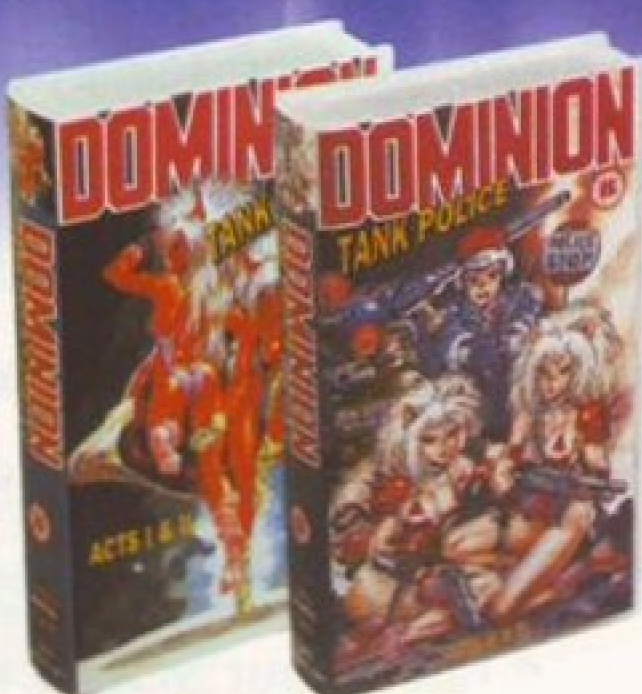




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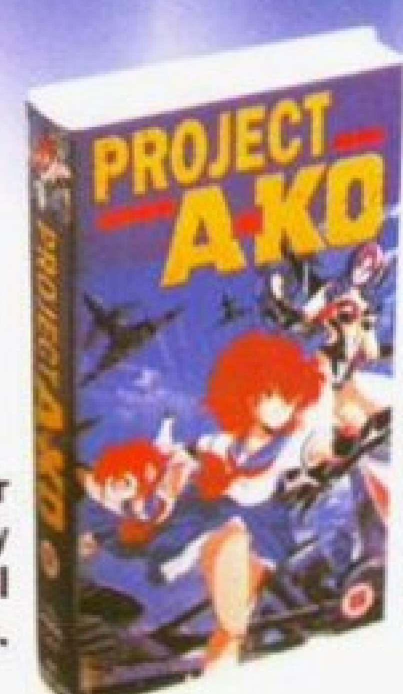


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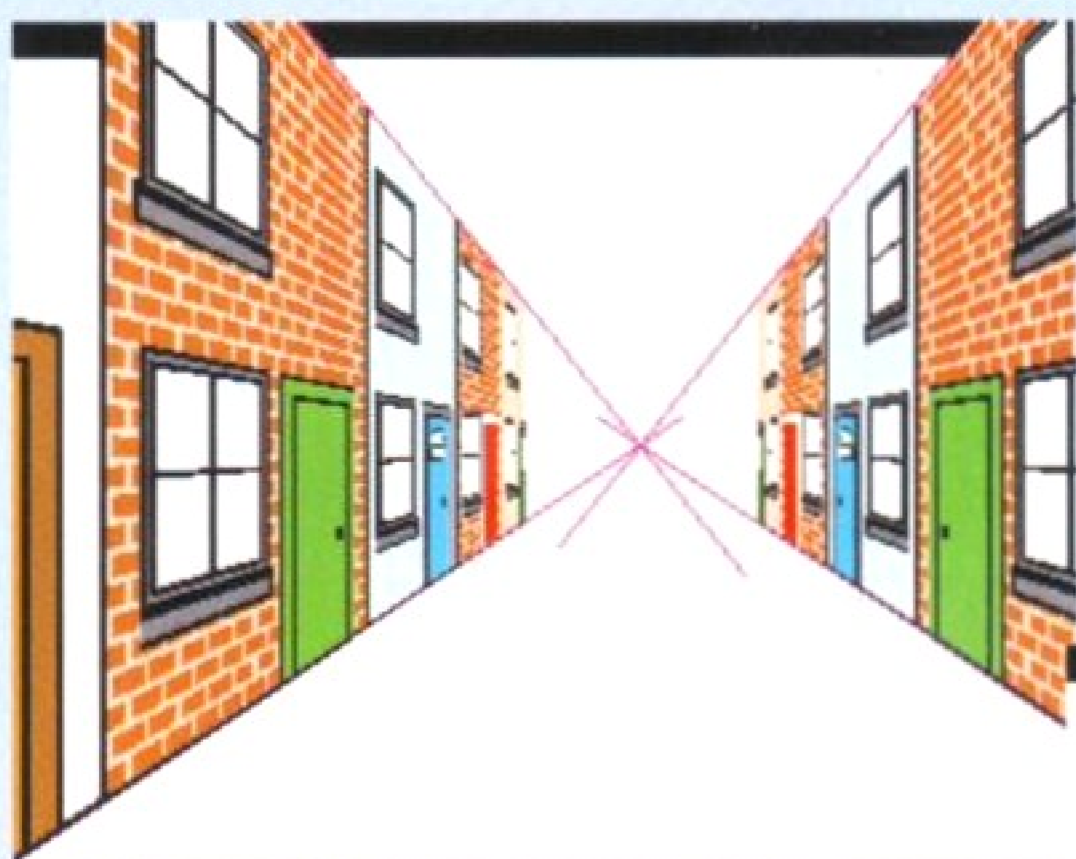
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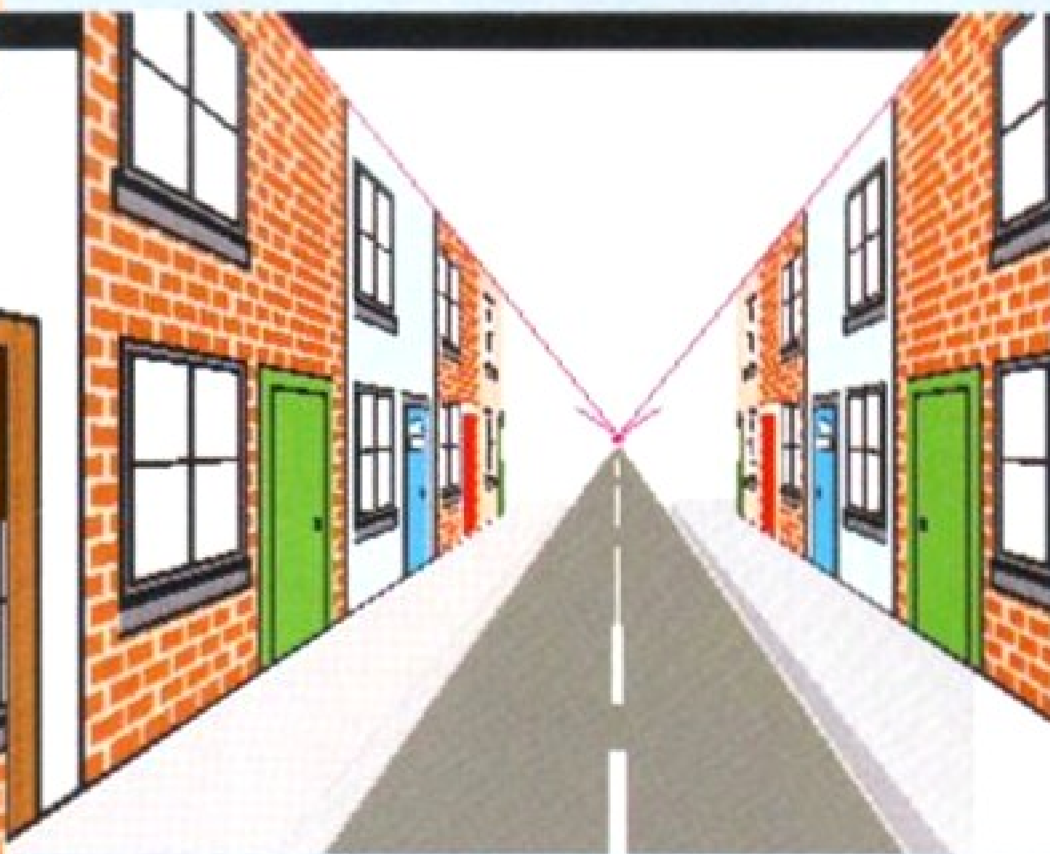
Using the line option, draw a magenta line from the vanishing point to just above the tops of the houses so that you have a guideline for the rooftops, then fill the roofs in with black.



Right, that's the main complicated bit out of the way, and the rest's pretty simple. All we've got to do now is add some detail, such as the road and the sky.

Draw the guidelines for the road first, by tracing two magenta lines from the vanishing point to the bottom of the screen. Remember to leave room for a pavement. Create a few new grey shades using the colour palette, then use them to create the road and the pavement.

Now draw lines in dark grey from the vanishing point along the pavements, and some staggered horizontal lines to form the pavement cracks.



You will notice here that the top part of the menu has left a black patch behind when it was removed. This is a slight quirk of *DPaint*, but it's a mistake which is easily corrected.

Simply select the appropriate background colour (in this case white), select the Fill icon then fill in the offending area with the selected colour.

This 'glitch' doesn't happen too often, but it can be a pain when it does – so be careful.



Now we must get rid of the magenta guidelines. Although it isn't difficult to remove them using the magnify facility, it is very time consuming and can be achieved much more quickly. This is where the stencil facility comes into its own.

Access the Make Stencil option from the Effects menu, or hold down Shift and press the '~' (tilde) key. Click on Clear, then select magenta from the range. Click on 'Invert' and then 'Make', and this will effectively 'lock' all the colours in the range except for the magenta of the lines we want to lose.

Using a fairly large brush, select freehand mode and paint over all the areas of magenta with the required colour. For example, around the pavement area select a light grey colour, and select white for the sky areas. When you've finished, turn the stencil off by pressing the apostrophe key.



It is now safe to add in some detail for the street scene. Use the magnify option as much as possible, because you will find it much easier for detail when working at pixel level.

Don't go overboard! This is very important. Concentrate on tidying up what you've already drawn, and just add very simple details one at a time. That way you can always use Undo if you think you've gone too far. Also, don't use too many colours from the palette, as you will need between eight and twelve spare ones when drawing the sky. Optimise you palette if necessary – see the *Beginners* section of the main feature for more details.

From the pictures on the left you can see that we have added some details: windowsills beneath the windows using the different scales of grey which are available; some shadows for the frames and doors (this effect is also known as 'bas–relief' shading, and is used very often to give a feeling of depth or to add a 'metallic' feel to an object); and a bit of detail near the vanishing point – just a bridge and a field for now.

Continued on Page 42

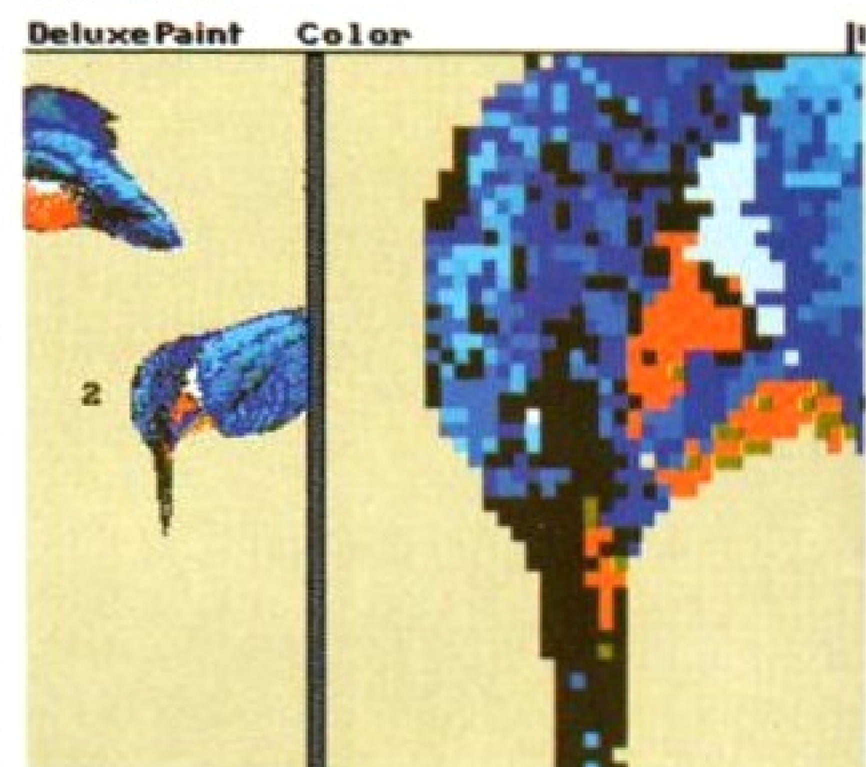
Half-Decent

- Tracing: the Unfilled Polygon tool and some non-Amiga cheating can be easily used to copy images from photographs or drawings onto the screen in perfect proportion.

1. Trace the original carefully using a permanent felt pen and some transparent material (an acetate 'cel' is best but cellophane packaging or Clingfilm is quite adequate.)
2. Stick the cel to the screen (it may stay put with static).
3. Copy behind the tracing using the Polygon tool for precision, or Freehand for speed. (The polygon tool also ensures no gaps.)

FILLING WITH COLOUR

- Save first: before progressing from outline drawing to solid image save your work. Filling is fraught with danger!
- Solid edges: a Flood Fill will find the slightest gap in your outline. Do a check fill first, remembering that Undo will remove it if it has leaked, provided you do not do anything else on screen. DON'T PANIC. If you get a leak just press the U key.
- Finding leaks: if you cannot find the gap, try filling with a gradient of colours. This is a slower flood and may show where the colour is escaping.



The Magnify option is a useful facility when painting in detail.

Using differe

Right, so now you've practiced painting in low-resolution mode (lo-res = 256x320) using 32 colours, you may like to try using one of the other modes that the Amiga has to offer. Here's a run down of the ones available:

MEDIUM RESOLUTION

A medium resolution (Med-Res) screen has the same number of horizontal lines as a low resolution screen (256), but twice the number of vertical lines (640). Therefore the pixels are of the same height, but half the width. Only 16 colours are available on the screen in this mode.

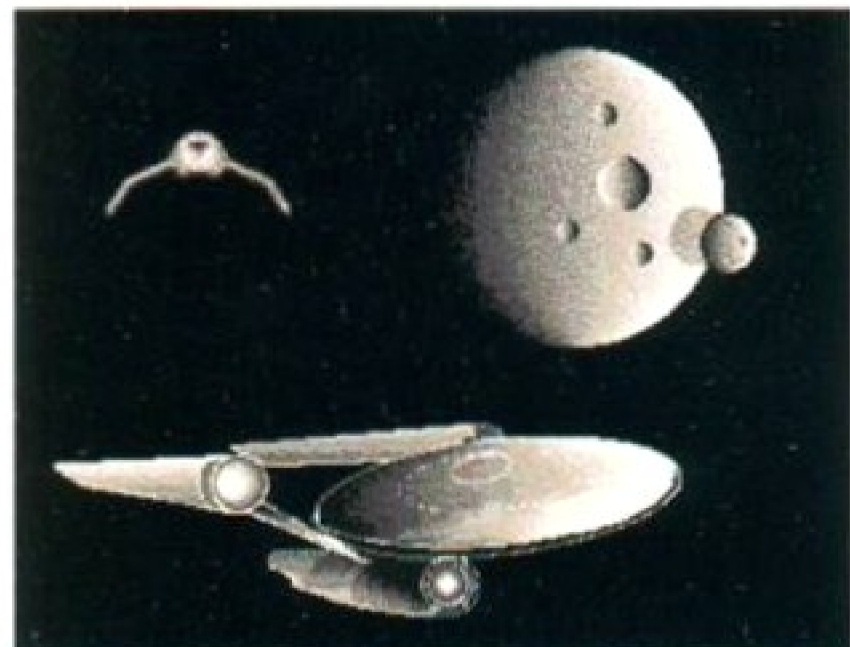
INTERLACE

This mode effectively doubles the number of horizontal lines on the screen to 256, but leaves the number of vertical lines at 320. Therefore the pixels are of the same width, but half the height. Like Lo-Res, up to 32 colours are available on the screen in this mode. Because Interlace uses a special

● Use magnify: the leak is still elusive eh? Press M for magnify then reduce the zoom to a minimum with the < key. Move the cursor around the outline in the normal size screen on the left. Pressing the N key will centre the magnified view on the cursor.

● Remove Isolated Pixels: made a mistake? Fill can also be used to remove a fill, provided that there are no pixels of the fill colour that you want to keep, as re-filling to the background colour will remove those as well.

However, this can be used to advantage. If you have lots of isolated pixels that need removing, save your work and then fill the background with the colour of the odd pixel, and then again with the background colour.



Use Gradient fills to achieve an airbrushed look for smooth surfaces, especially metallic ones.

● Gradient fills: the best way to get a smooth 'airbrushed' look is not with the Airbrush tool at all, but with a gradient fill. The reason that the Airbrush tool will let you down is that with only 32 colours, the palette will have to be set up very carefully.

● Surface Texture: varying the amount of dither can change how granular or rough a surface looks. In this way an object with the same colour range can be made to look rough or smooth, matt or shiny. More dither equals rougher, while less means smoother. More highlight means shiny, while less means matt.

● Highlights: for more sophisticated effects, the gradient can be changed to dark-light-dark, and the final, rotated brush can have highlights and even backlight added with careful use of the airbrush.

● Indentation: in *DPaint III* the Palette dialog window (key shortcut P) has an arrow on the right side. Clicking here reverses the direction of the currently selected gradient. With practice this can be used to give a heavily eroded or indented effect. The classic example is of a cratered moon.

● Take advantage of imperfections: a Freehand object with gradient fill sometimes produces curious horizontal glitches that can spoil a smooth fill.

This annoying shortcoming can sometimes be put to good use because it gives extra shadowing to irregular surfaces. With practice and a suitable palette mountains, deserts, badlands, rough seas, rolling hills, glacial moraines and even leather textures can be produced.

● Light direction with *Deluxe Paint III:* light direction effects can be set in *DPaint III*, but with some effort. The technique is:

1. Produce a horizontal or vertical gradient.
2. Pick up a section as a brush.
3. Rotate it by, say, 45 degrees
4. Paste it down and pick up a square section from it.
5. Set Wrap in the Fill dialog window and draw a filled shape.

● Moving Palettes: in 32-colour mode, try to use the left 16 colours for objects and the right 16 for backgrounds. This keeps all your pictures standard, and so if objects are drawn in 4/8/16-colour mode and saved as brushes, they can be loaded into 32-colour pictures along with their palette. (The 'Use Brush Palette' on the Picture/ChangeColour menu only changes the first 4/8/16 colours).

● Perspective Rotation: the Rotation tool in the Brush menu can sometimes be very slow with a large brush.

A much faster and easier method is to go into perspective mode (by pressing the keypad Enter key – if you have one!) and use the keypad keys 1 & 2 to rotate the brush around the z axis, then paste it down.

resolutions

technique to display twice the normal number of horizontal lines (effectively it meshes two screen images to form a single interlaced image), a flicker is noticeable on the screen – this can be cured by using an expensive multi-sync monitor and an add-on called a Flicker Fixer.

HIGH RESOLUTION

A high resolution (Hi-Res) screen has twice the number of horizontal lines as a Lo-Res screen (512) and twice the number of vertical lines (640), so the pixels are the same shape in both modes.

Like Med-Res, only 16 colours are available. As Hi-Res mode uses interlaced pixels in a similar way to Interlace mode a flicker occurs on the screen, especially when contrasting colours are next to each other.

EXTRA HALFBRITE

Extra Halfbrite is a special function of the Amiga which doubles the number of colours available on the screen. It only works in 32-colour modes (Lo-Res and Interlace), and therefore the maximum number of colours available in either of these two modes is 64. Enter Extra Halfbrite mode by first selecting Lo-Res or Interlace, then setting the number of colours to 64.

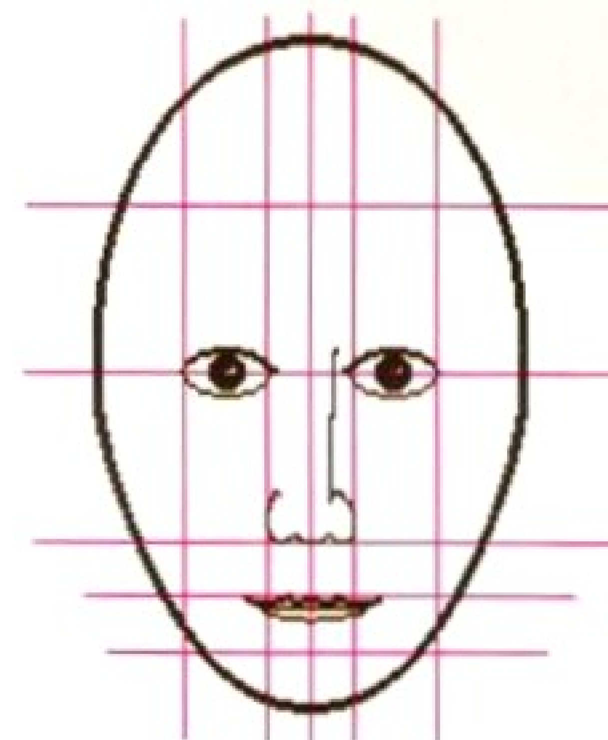
HOLD AND MODIFY (HAM)

HAM mode is a function that uses a special technique to effectively display all 4,096 colours on the screen at any one time. It works by taking the colour value of one pixel, and modifying one of its red, green or blue components to display the colour of the next pixel.

Because it uses this technique it is not possible to display all colours in all areas of the screen. It is not possible, for instance, to display a black pixel and a white pixel next to one another; instead at least two pixels must be used to separate them. This means that on HAM screens an effect known as 'fringing' is common, this is where pixels are used to separate two different colours.

The HAM function can only be activated when using Lo-Res or Interlace modes.

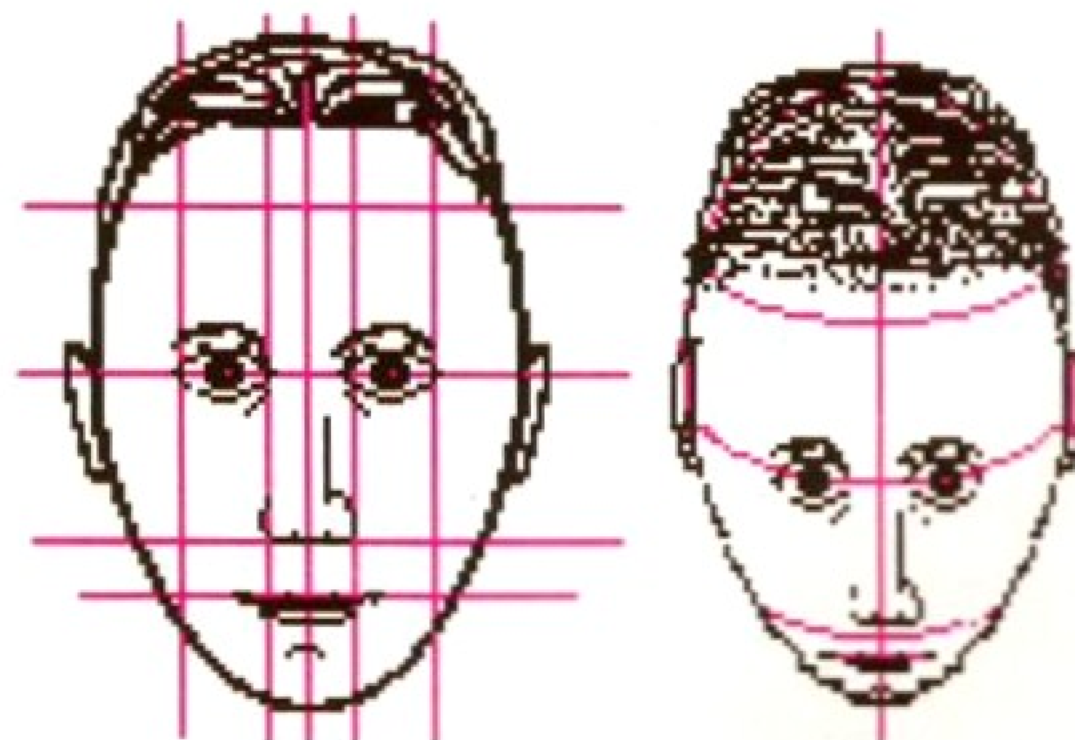
Now draw some features on the face in the rectangles you have just made, like so.



Immediately the face springs to life, even with the most basic features. Getting slightly more complicated, we should now add in some more bits – eyebrows, eyelids, ears and hair



Now we're really getting somewhere. Moving the head around so that it can be viewed from another direction is easy. To view from slightly above, draw the original ellipse again, and make it the same width but slightly shorter. Now draw the basic guidelines in again, but this time instead of lines use ellipses - these make up



the outline of the face. Pick up the features one by one as brushes, rotate them downwards using Perspective, then paste them down on the face using the ellipses as guides.

As an experiment try creating some expressions for the face, such as a smile or a frown. You'll be surprised how easy it is.

We are now armed with the basic knowledge of face drawing. Like any skill, practice makes perfect. Keep drawing the faces, adding in more and more detail as you go along. Try to make each one different – for instance, draw an old man with glasses, or a young baby – and remember, the same principles apply to all types of face.

Continued on Page 43

Curse of Enchantia







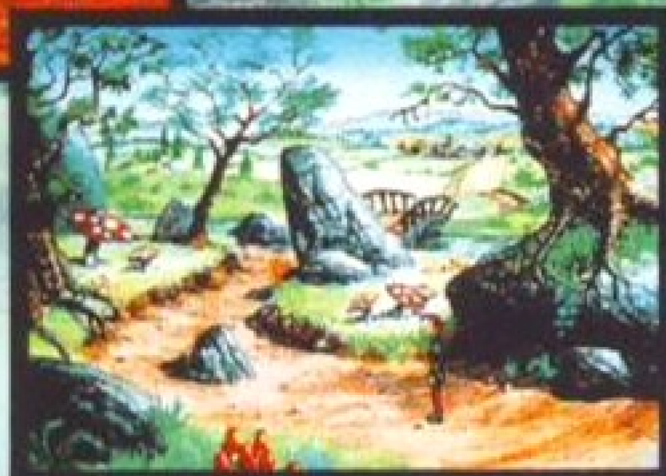
Sucked into the cursed land of Enchantia, Brad finds himself chained and manacled inside a castle's dungeon. He escapes from the castle via a subterranean cave system and meets fortune tellers, magicians, dragons, elephant seals, fire demons plus many other colourful characters both friendly and otherwise!

Travel with Brad to the Valley of the Lost, the Ice Palace and the Graveyard in his quest to ensure his safe passage home.

Curse of Enchantia is available on Commodore Amiga 1 meg only) and IBM PC compatibles.









Screen shots from various formats.

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DPainting with the pros

These guys have created stunning-looking games like Shadowlands and Riders of Rohan. So, just how do they do it?

Jolyon Myers and Alan Tomkins of Domark

The 'art' people at Domark. One could call them normal, but then again we are talking 'artists'.

THE DOMARK LADS are a bunch of raving dudes in reality, but between them they have some useful tips for the budding *DPaint* artist. A lot of their tips are basic common sense, and many are actually in the manual, it is just a case of finding them. Domark's devastating designers can save you time, however, with their short and informative tips...

"When creating your picture, don't be tempted to use lots of tools. Using the spray can, for example, tends to give a computery effect to your picture that lacks realism. It is often better to dither and shade things by hand, especially if there are areas of high contrast, because this gives a more realistic view of the picture. It also allows you to convey part of your own style in your picture.

"When we consider what colours we want to use, we like to have a palette with lots of contrasting colours with a couple of extra shades of each colour to draw with. In this way it is possible to create striking pictures with high contrast that literally stand out.

"Starting your picture can be difficult. We basically draw the image in an outline form before putting any colour on the screen. Once this is done and we're happy with the shape, it is time to add broad blocks of colour in large areas rather like on a canvas, and then add detail to the picture as it's required. It is also a good idea to try and give your pictures as much action as possible, ie as much realism, as if they were still-pictures of a real-life event. This helps to give the pictures a sense of depth. It is a good idea to give your pictures some real-life perspective with some different levels to the picture.

"Another good tip that everybody doing computer art should use, is always use anti-aliasing. This can be difficult if you are restricted palette-wise, but one extra shade of each colour is sufficient to produce a smoother display than would normally be visible.

"The main point about anti-aliasing is to compensate for the low resolution of the screen and hence to smooth out the pixel transitions. It is often better not to use Smooth, as its effects are sometimes a little strange; producing a mottled effect, so the hand-drawn effects are usually better. When considering palettes in this case, it is wise to keep your shades of certain colours together, so it is easy to use anti-aliasing and the Range tool to pick out highlights using the shade tools when working in detail on colourful objects.

"An obvious method, yet often forgotten, to help you copy pictures is to produce a grid on transparent paper and literally copy out areas in blocks on to a simulated grid on your computer screen block by block. As all the blocks are drawn, it is easy to gel the picture together and also get everything in the correct proportions to everything else in the picture.

"Another very important and obvious tip is to always make a backup of your picture as you create it. You might find, however, if you are experimenting with different techniques for various effects, it can be tedious and time-consuming to keep making backups. So a short cut here is to use your spare screen by pressing 'Shift' and the 'J' key, but, if this is already being used, you can keep a backup in memory by simply adding a frame to your picture. Effectively this creates an animation of your changes in frames, and if you are unhappy with an effect, you can delete the current frame and revert to your original.

"When producing animations, if you want to create a smooth path for a brush to travel along, before you start painting press and hold the left 'Amiga' key as you move your mouse [keep the left button pressed] and *DPaint* will transform your motions into an animated sequence. This is an easy way to produce animations with complex brush motions. It also works on functions other than the freehand tool, so you can create an object travelling in a perfect circle by simply pressing the left Amiga key again, before painting.

"Normally it's difficult to create objects travelling in strict geometric shapes, but this provides an easy solution. The only drawback is if you have 'continuous draw' on, there will be one frame for every pixel moved, so your animations can be a little slow. To get round this, set drawing to every nth dot at five or so.

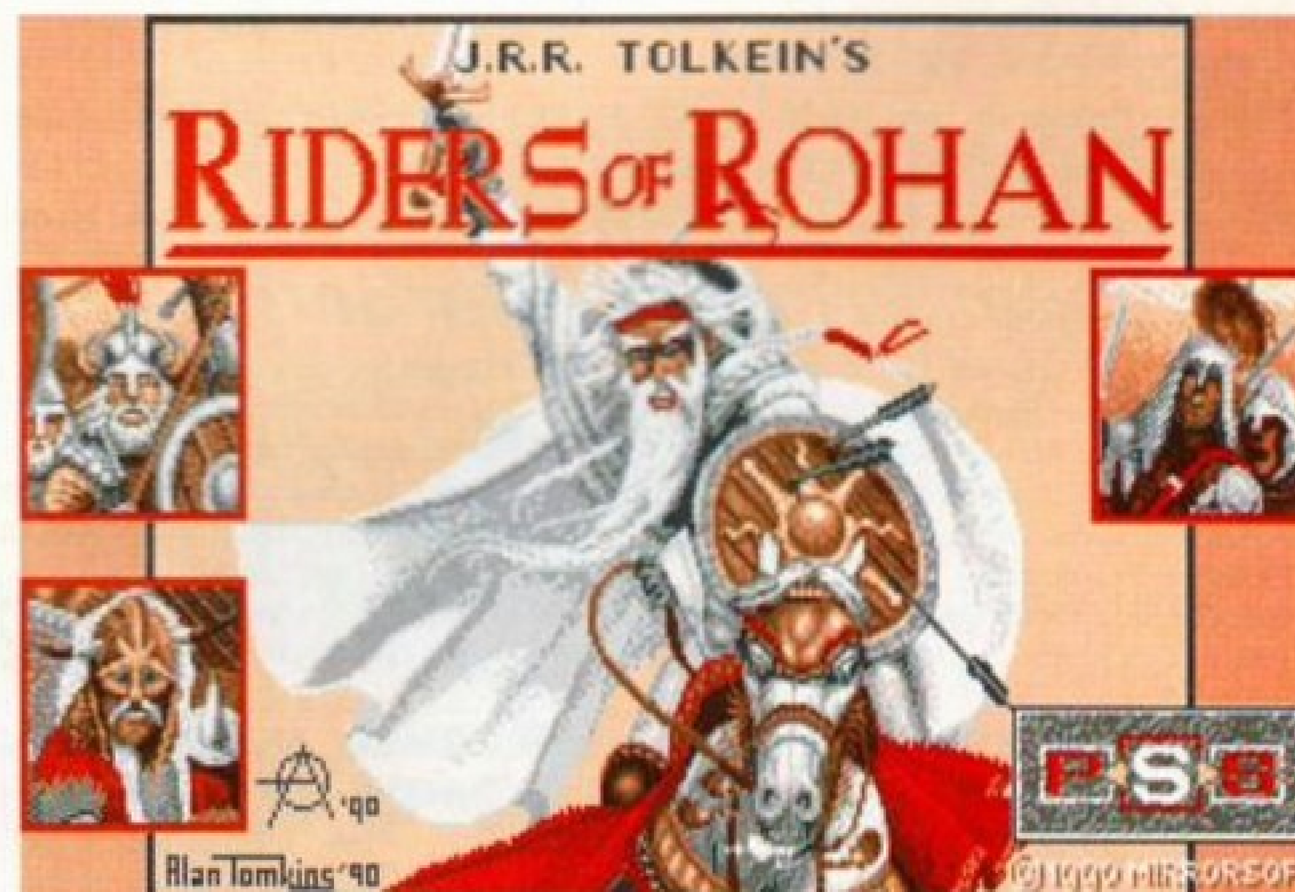


This is what can be done with few colours, but with lots of shades. The space ship has a sepia effect, and the blue/purple graduation helps to highlight areas.

Computer art can be very restrictive, especially with the low resolution and the lack of colours you have to work with. Getting across detail in an image using pixels is an art form in itself.

"There are a few simple tips to consider when creating your picture that can be useful, especially if you work with variables in mind. It is a good idea to decide exactly where your light source is before you start drawing, and keep this clear in your mind to help you produce a consistent picture.

A good way to visualise your picture is to do a small-scale picture on the screen first, in full proportion, which is often easier at small sizes, and then enlarge it to the full screen. This way you can quickly draw the basics of an object and add detail. This is not a way to draw however, just a way to experiment with proportions and layout." Cheers Domark. Turn to Page 41 for Psygnosis' hints and tips.







DPainting with the pros

How do Psygnosis transfer their visual ideas into games like Lemmings? Two of their leading graphic artists tell you how...

Jeff Bramfett and Mike Waterworth of Psygnosis

The Psygnosis guys and gals. Responsible for various graphical gems like *The Killing Game Show*.

AS FAR AS Jeff Bramfett and Mike Waterworth are concerned, in order to become a graphic artist, or at least work for Psygnosis, you must have some kind of qualification in art: ie a degree in illustration or graphic design. Even then, there is a steep learning curve to progress along, translating your artistic knowledge into a working knowledge of *DPaint*. Jeff and Mike give you a few tips on making that curve a little less steep...

Jeff believes there is no better way to create a good picture "than to get used to the medium you are using, and experiment with it to learn how to use all the effects, and then use your knowledge and apply it." Much like Jolyon from Domark (see Page 39), Jeff suggests it's not a good idea to use every effect you can in a picture, but only use the tools that you actually need.

There is a variety of ways to create in-game graphics, but Jeff explains most of the methods used "are used to create screens from blocks. The obvious method for assembling backgrounds and maps is to use *DPaint* with the Grid function on."

According to Mike the easiest way to use this is to pick up your blocks, and rotate and flip them as necessary to build up the screen. But Mike has found a small quirk here: "It's basically that if you flip your brushes with Grid on, you tend to inherit a pixel gap on the edge of your brush. So, in this case you have to keep switching Grid on and off. Another way to add variety to your screens is have a dummy outline of your block which has the middle of the block vacant for a new design. This enables you to join up your blocks, because all the edges should be designed to match up but have a new design in the middle. If you design your blocks well enough, you can do this at any size to provide an easy way of making a consistent background or map."

Of course one of the fiddliest things to cope with when designing games is drawing sprites. Jeff finds it useful when creating sprites or small characters on screen, to use the Magnify tool: "Despite the fact the image in the enlarged window is often just a jumble of pixels, it is amazing how a single pixel can make such a difference. Animating images is also made a lot easier by using the Light-Table function. This basically shows you a dimmed version of your last frame which you can draw objects on top of without affecting the original. A good tip for animating objects with legs is that you only actually have to draw half the number of legs that you need for the object. On a person for example, you need only draw the leg on the background, pick it up as a brush, move on a few frames and paste it down again. This makes it easier to make sure that the motion of each leg is correct and in time."

Creating static pictures is easier. Jeff starts off with a line drawing, and often uses gradient fills behind objects for the background. "The problem I find with the Gradient Fill tool, however, is that there is only a random dithering option, no ordered method. So, producing a background this way can often look strange, especially if you have a large- colour separation between the ends of the ranges.

"The solution is, of course, to edit the fill pixel by pixel to smooth out the transitions between colours to produce a better effect. It is always tricky however, trying to fill in irregularly shaped areas with gradient fills. You can of course just use the fill tool to fill in a closed area." But what if the area isn't closed, or you don't want a standard gradient fill that the Fill tool produces?

"The solution here is a clever one. Create your fill to match the size of the area you want, and paste it down on the spare screen exactly under where you want it to go. Now switch back to your main screen and use the Complex Brush option to trace the outline of the area you want to fill but, just before you close the brush loop, while still holding down the left mouse button, press the 'J' key to switch to the spare, and the brush tool will pick up what was 'under' your object. This provides an easy method to pick up complex brush shapes."

When drawing small characters or sprites, Mike likes to make sure he knows exactly how the character would look like in real life, by drawing a large-scale image of the character that he is trying to portray. "This helps me visualise what the character is like and what kind of details it has that have to be translated to the computer screen. It helps me to reflect the personality of the pixelated character."

A good example of this is *Lemmings*. On screen, the characters are blobs of blue and green, only a few pixels high, yet they have their own distinct personalities. The reason for this is partly due to the packaging, and an illustration showing the Lemmings at a larger scale, so people know what they would look like and they relate to that, instead of the computer image. So there you go, straight from the owl's mouth, so to speak.



This stunning picture is actually a copy of the Roger Dean illustration for the *Barbarian* series of games. The computer version uses some excellent techniques to reproduce this faithful copy.



Shades of grey in the main give this picture its futuristic 'metallic' look. The hazy background provides an excellent contrast to the main image.



OK, now for the sky. The best way to do this is to draw a sky scene on a separate page, and then insert it into the main drawing. Create two way-out colours that aren't used in the main drawing (you've already got magenta, so just do one more – eg cyan), then fill in the sky with one and all the windows with the other.

Flip to the other screen by pressing J, and use the palette to create a mid-blue colour just below the way-out colours you created earlier. Make the bottom right-hand colour white, then click on Spread. Position the cursor over the new blue, and click the left-hand button. The computer will calculate a range of blue shades between the two. Click on Range, then click on the white again. This lets the program know that these colours are part of a group.



Set the background colour to dark blue, and the foreground colour to white. Using the Filled Polygon tool, draw a short diagonal shape, like the picture on the left.

Now pick it up as a brush, select the darkest blue as a background colour, and clear the screen. Click on the Airbrush icon, and select Shade from the Mode menu (or press F5). Now hold the left button down as you wibble the cursor about the screen, and the computer will draw patterns using the brush shape in the colours chosen as a range.

Again, the best way to do this is to practice, so if it doesn't work properly at first, try again! (Remember you can use the right mouse button to draw darker shapes if required. Also try varying the brush shapes for different clouds.)

For effect, try drawing a distant hilltop scene using the filled polygon option with a dark blue colour, like the one in the picture above. Pick a good-sized portion of the screen out as a brush – including the bits you want to go on the main picture. Press J to flip to the main screen.



Remember the stencil option? Well, you need to use it again now. Go into Stencil mode, but this time lock the cyan colour (by clicking on the background when you're in stencil mode), then click on Invert and Make, and press the F3 (Replace) key. You will now find that the sky brush will only be shown in the background. Use your judgement as to the position of the sky and the hills, then click the left mouse button. Don't forget to turn the stencil off again.

To get a nice shiny effect on the windows, swap to the other screen again, clear it, then draw a short diagonal line in white. Pick it up as a brush. Click on the next shade of blue from the range, then press O (for outline). Click on the next blue shade, then press O again. Continue doing this about eight times, then pick the whole thing up as a brush.

Flip to the main screen again, then lock the magenta colour using the stencil. Paint over the windows using the brush, creating an effect similar to the one in the picture below. Turn the stencil off again. OK, now we're basically finished!



Finally, you may like to add a few items of detail, such as a mottled effect on the walls of the painted houses, and a bit of texture on the roadsides - these are easy when using the airbrush option. Just use the stencil facility again, but this time lock all the colours apart from the colour of the road or the walls where you want to paint.

We decided that the sky and background were a bit too dark, so we lightened them up a little. Moving the range of sky blues up a bit in the palette by adding some red and yellow components, and changing the hills in the background to mid-green made the whole scene brighter and more cheerful.

Also, we thought it would be nice to include a football scene in the background. The name of the game is experimentation, and now you're experienced in some of the techniques used in *DPaint* – use them!

Advanced



The default palette. Notice that the scale of grey shades is not smooth.

- Smooth gradient: curiously, the grey-scale gradient provided as a default has a sudden step between palette colours 27 and 28. Curing this makes the light end darker or the dark end lighter but gives a much smoother graduation. Using Spread in the palette dialog window is obviously not always perfect, so look carefully at the results and experiment to achieve what you want.
- Limited Memory: if you want to move or transform an area larger than your Amiga's memory will allow, work with two halves or four quarters.

To be sure of registration of the areas, use Cut (right button) to pick up the sections. For example, to reduce the size of a large object by thirty percent:

1. Cut approximately a quarter of the object (right button).
2. Press key J for the spare screen and then the – (minus) key three times for 30% reduction, and then paste down.
3. Press key J to return to the object and repeat stages 1. and 2., aligning each piece carefully. Make sure that each cut section is approximately the same size so that the percentage reduction is similar.



Using Gridlock it is easy to build up a picture using modular objects.

- Building Blocks: using Gridlock it is possible to build modular objects that will join together to make larger constructions. For example, pipes, carved stone blocks, tiles, modular buildings and even space stations.

Generally speaking, if a module has been built with Gridlock on, it will link together with any object constructed with a similar Gridlock setting. This is the basic principle of many graphic games, where modular objects are often re-used many times, perhaps just with a colour change.

The simplest object to build with is a rectangular brick, as follows:

1. Using Gridlock On with the default spacing, and the Straight line tool, draw an isometric

view of a block. Shade the three sides with light, medium and dark colours to suggest the direction of the light as it would look on a three-dimensional object.
2. Still with Gridlock on, pick up the block as a Custom Brush.
3. Use this block to build with and start at the back of the construction.

- Light direction with *Deluxe Paint IV*: unlike *DPaint III*, *DPaint IV* provides lots of controls for texture and light direction. The dither can be random, which gives natural-looking effects on surfaces, or patterned for other effects, especially 'textile weave'.
- Optical Mixing: if you need more colours than your palette provides, try mixing them optically. If you produce an array of alternating red and white pixels in a chequerboard pattern (best done on a grid of say 4x4 then picked as a brush and repeated to get an array), the overall effect is of a pale red because the red and white mix in your eye.

This technique can be used with any of the colours available giving you dozens of new shades.

- Spray Mixing: a similar, though rougher, optical mix can be produced using the Airbrush, by washing different colours over each other. This is ideal for textures such as desert landscapes and ploughed fields.

THE MODES MENU

- Smear: especially when working with digitised images it is often necessary to remove a part of a picture and stick it in elsewhere. To do this seamlessly means that you must reconstruct the background in this area.

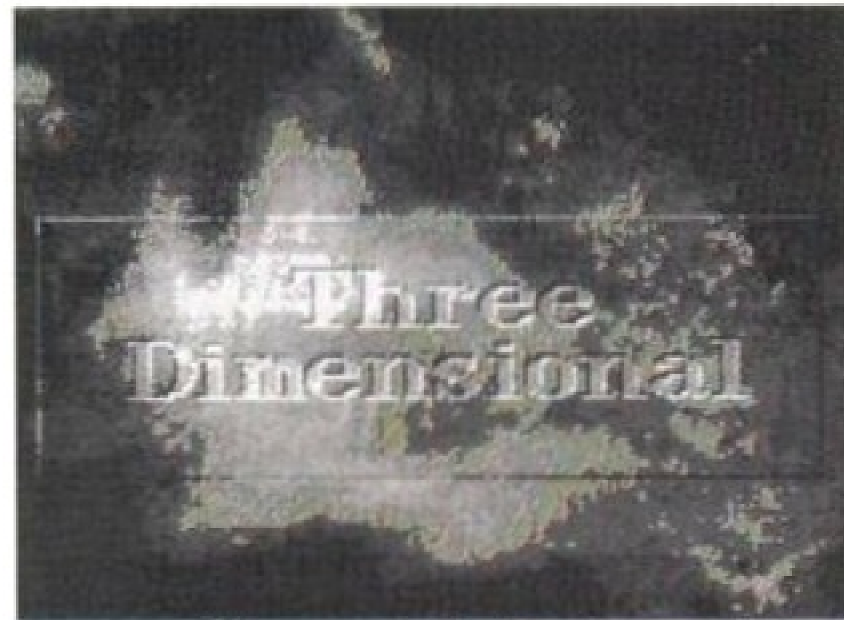
Use small pieces of the existing background to patch together a reasonable approximation. Then use Smear to hide the joins by breaking them up.

- Backgrounds: smear can also be used to create backgrounds and to produce 'jumbled' images. For example a reflection on ruffled water needs to be slightly Smeared before it will look right.
- Blend: potentially, Blend is an extremely powerful tool, but it needs lots of intermediate shades. Set up your range carefully – the more colours that are available, the better Blend will work. Use a small brush, and make sure that it's using a colour within the range.
- Broken Brush for texture: to produce a wide range of 'artistic' effects, Blend can be used with a Broken Brush (a large brush with many background-coloured 'holes' in it).

If the pattern of holes is carefully constructed, effects similar to watercolour or pastel crayons on coarse paper can be achieved. This is especially effective in HAM mode in *Deluxe Paint IV*.

- Shade: if you need to add shadows or highlights to your work, this is the tool to use – but be careful, work with single clicks of the mouse button rather than holding it. The palette needs to be set up with a good range of the colours you are shading, which can be quite difficult, even with 32.

Sometimes EHB mode is much better for this, though it only gives you one degree of shade. *Deluxe Paint IV* in HAM mode cannot use the Shade mode – a great pity and a bit of



Drawing while using the Shade option can be used to easily create three dimensional effects.

a mystery to us – all those extra colours should make shading easy.

- Drawing with Shade: with care it is possible to draw in shade mode, building up 3D-looking objects with left and right buttons. The best way to work is with a monochrome palette (shades of grey), but this can be given more interest by slightly changing the colour of some of the shades.

If you spread between black and white over 30 of the 32-colours (leaving colours 0 and 1 as a separate black and white) you will find that many of the shades are duplicated (there are only 16 shades of grey). Change the duplicates into blues, greens, reds and yellows with the same tonal value. Now set the range to be these 30 colours and experiment with Shade mode and a range of brushes.

- Smooth: the obvious use of Smooth is to remove the jagged stepping that occurs at the edges of objects, but it can also put whole areas out of focus.

For example, an object can be emphasised strongly by putting it on a background that has been smoothed.

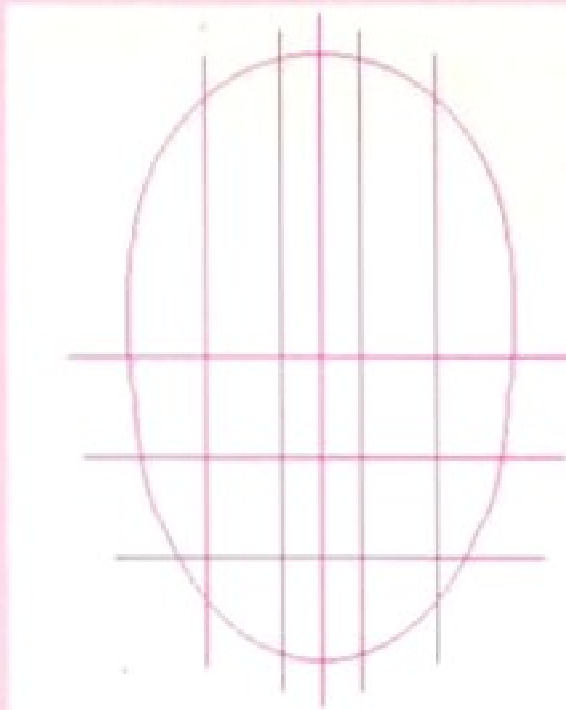
- Depth of Field effects: taken further, the Smoothing effect can produce Depth of Field effects similar to those achieved when using a wide aperture in photography.

To do this, apply Smooth to the background three or four times to make it very blurred, apply it once or twice to middle distance objects, and not at all to close objects. This will increase the depth of the picture.

- Motion Blur: an alternative, artistic, use of Smooth and depth of field is to blur the closer object to give the dramatic effect of a moving object. This can be enhanced with Blend by dragging the 'trailing' edge of the object slightly. For the picture below we have taken a scene from a Team 17 game and locked all the foreground colours with the stencil. A large, rectangular block was then picked up as a brush and dragged across the screen using the straight line tool and the blend mode, which 'blurs' the background colours.



Motion Blur is a great way to give an effect of movement in your picture.



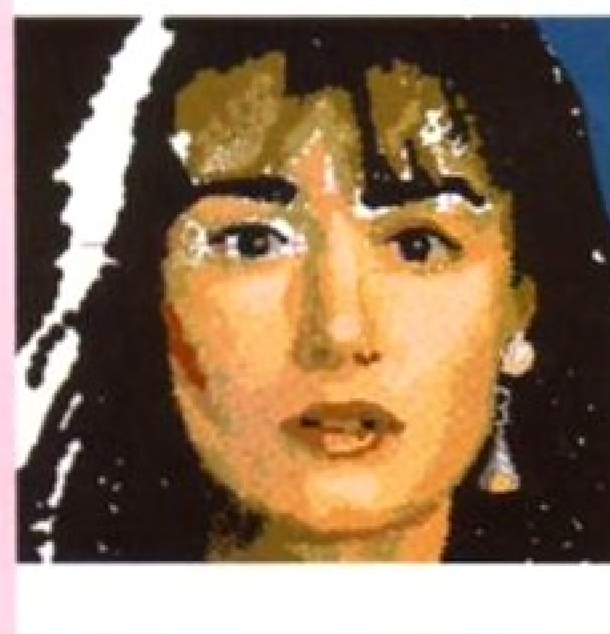
Now we've taken a look at how a face is drawn, we are going to try to draw our cover model using the same basic principles.

As a beginning point we must use a guideline grid. We used the photograph as a guide for this, but whatever you're drawing you must make sure that the guide is in the correct proportion before you begin.



Click the right button on the Airbrush icon, then holding down the left button size the brush using the mouse. Select a large round brush from the top menu.

Select a range of colours using the palette in order that you can paint the skin, hair and lips of the face. Leave some colours free. Paint the basic shape of the face using the colours.



Draw in the eyes, then shade the nose and lips and other features. Don't worry! We've jumped ahead a couple of stages here for reasons of space, but just take your time and do things in order.

Make the airbrush range a little larger, then carefully smooth out the edges on the face – don't use the Smooth option for this. Be patient, and use Undo if necessary.



Try to leave as many black and dark colours as possible until last, basically because it's easy to make a mistake and it's more noticeable when you are using black.

Continue using the Airbrush for shading until you are happy with the general shape of your face.

Using the Magnify option, draw the detailed bits such as eyes and lips.



When you're happy with the face itself, concentrate on the dark parts of the picture – remember, even dark hair has some highlights. Don't be afraid of using bright colours here – there's always the Undo facility if you need it.

Lastly, remember that with *DPaint* you are not confined to the size of your screen, so if you need a larger area, use the arrow keys to move around.

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If you get top marks in the special gamers' challenge you could make it to the finals at the Future Entertainment Show in November and face a play-off on the video wall with the TV cameras watching! And the winner will walk off with £10,000 in cash.

If you think you're up to the challenge, look up your nearest entry point below, and see if you are as good as you think you are...

THE PRIZES!

The winners of each heat will go forward to a regional final the same week. The winner of each regional final will get an **Amiga,** a **Mega Drive** and a **Super NES,** plus copies of the games which will be used in the finals so they can get ready in style. In the grand final itself, the runner up will get **£4,000** while the winner will go home an incredible **£10,000** richer!

FREE ENTRY!

HOW TO ENTER

Just turn up, ready to give of your best, at one of these heats being held all over the country:

12th, 13th, 14th, 15th October
Glasgow Union Street Megastore
Falkirk Games Centre
East Kilbride Games Centre

19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd October
Stockport Game Centre
Manchester Megastore



26th, 27th, 28th, 29th October
Bromley Game Centre
Croydon Game Centre
Guildford Game Centre
Ilford Game Centre
Kingston Game Centre
London Game Centre, 100 Oxford Street
Birmingham Megastore
Bristol Game Centre
Cardiff Megastore
Newcastle Megastore
Gateshead Game Centre

There you'll have to try out a special timed challenge on Zool, Robocop 3 or Aquatics. Regional finals will be held on the Friday of each week in a local Megastore, and the winners of the regional finals will go to the grand final in Earls Court on November 7th and 8th.

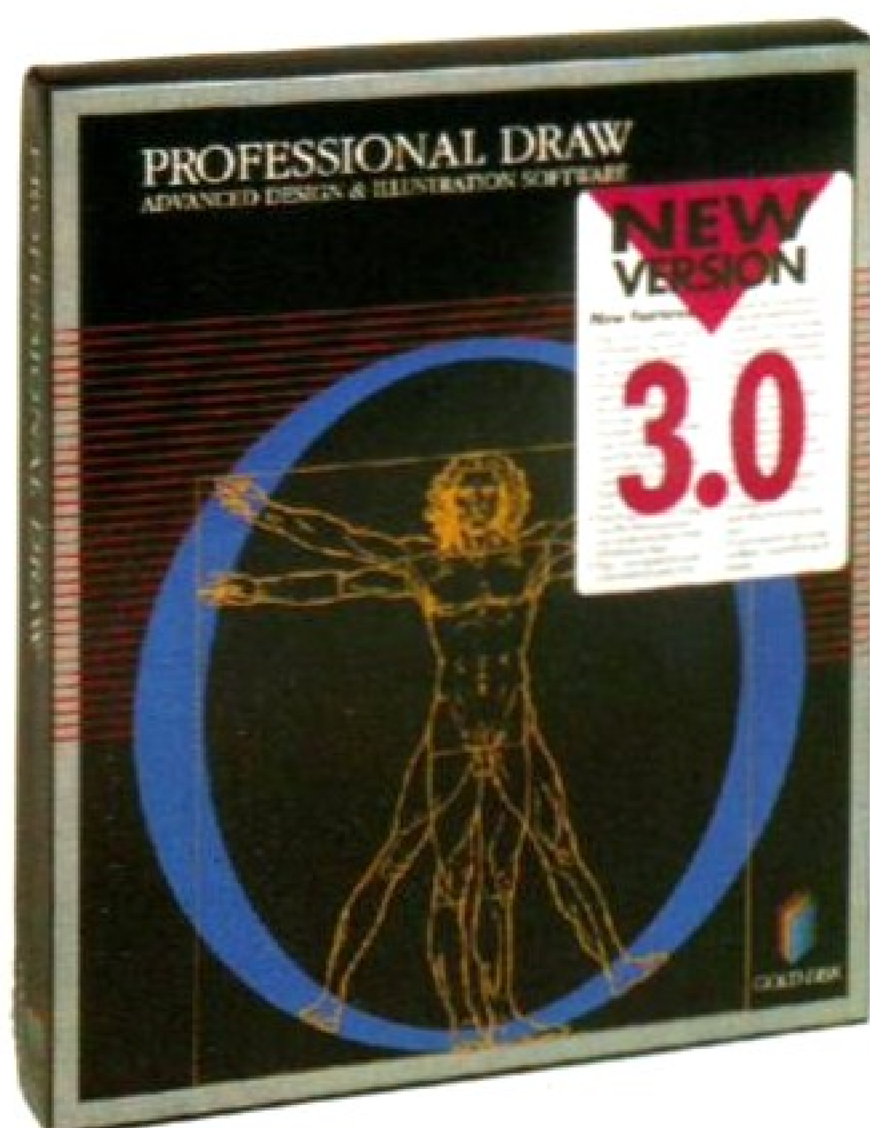
THE NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

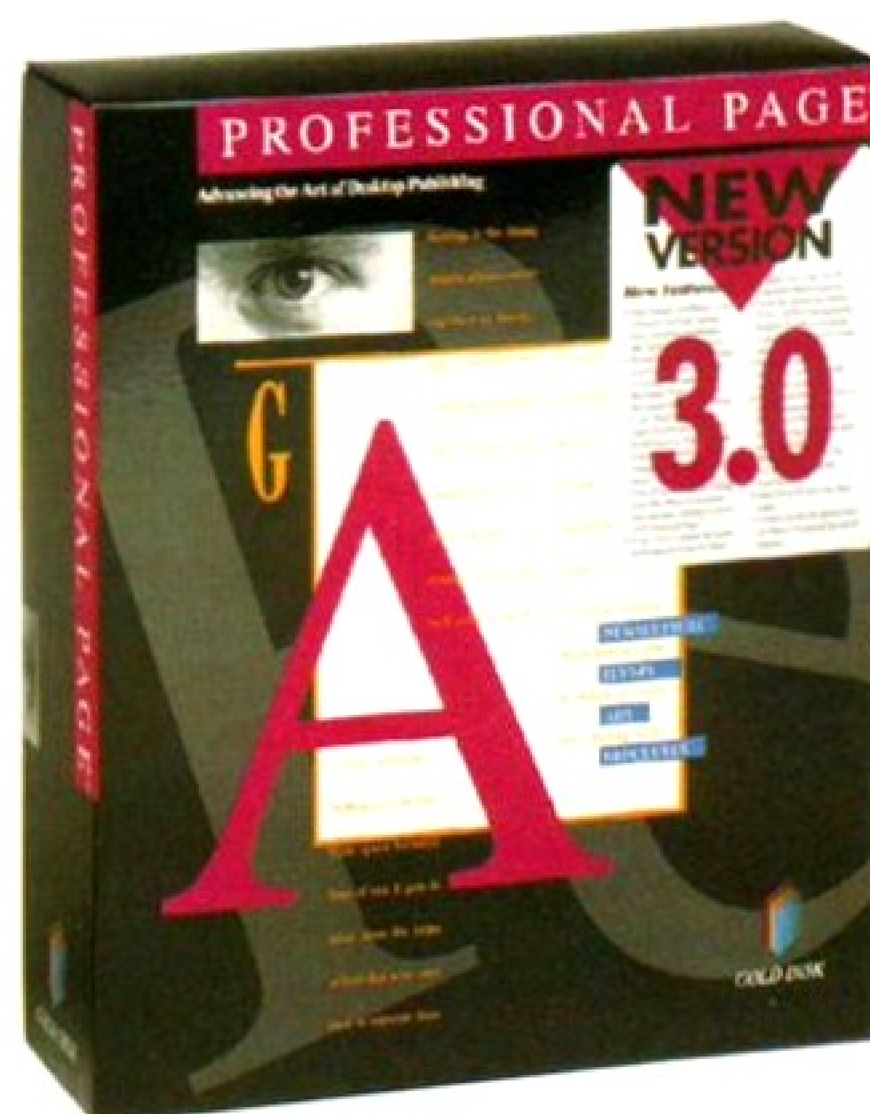
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Amiga Video

Everything you've always wanted to know about making your own video productions, presented by **Pat McDonald**.

THE AMIGA HAS always been touted as the ideal computer for video use. The main reasons for this are as follows: first, the machine was designed to provide inputs and outputs that already existed within the video industry; second, the spectacular quality of Amiga graphics; and third, there isn't anything to beat the computer for the same price.

Just as desk top publishing (DTP) uses computers to help produce printed documents, desk top video (DTV) uses computers to help produce video tapes. If you haven't got a video tape recorder, then you're like someone with a word processor but without a printer. For the rest of the article I'll have to assume you have a VTR.

The most important thing to remember is that video signal standards are different and incompatible from place to place. The differences are broadly as follows. Most western European videos, including UK types, as well as Australia and New Zealand use the PAL standard. North America, Japan and Korea use NTSC. The rest of the world usually uses the French-developed SECAM system. However, some VTRs are capable of playing tapes using the different systems, though this is not a standard feature.

Most Amigas work in either NTSC or PAL mode, although it makes sense to stick to the standard that your video setup uses. PAL runs at 50 fields per second. Two consecutive fields contain 625 horizontal scan lines of picture – these are combined to produce a display that runs at 25 visual frames per second.

NTSC runs at 60 fields per second, containing fewer horizontal lines. This is offset by the fact that NTSC produces a steadier, less flickery display.

Although these standards are used as the basis for TV transmissions, don't think that video and TV are the same thing. TV broadcasts are made by means of radio waves. You can't plug a TV aerial into an Amiga and get any sort of picture.

Video is controlled and directed by wiring and connections, not broadcast transmissions. Anyway, back to computers. The boom in camcorders (the fastest growing market for video equipment) has meant that lots and lots of people are shooting their own films. Any sort of TV program has at least the name of the production at the front in large, bold letters, and usually has a list of credits at the end. These are known collectively as 'titles', and a program which can generate such displays is called a 'video titler'. The biggest use of the Amiga in video is to produce such titles.



You can build up all sorts of video bits to make your video productions better, but even just the right software, an Amiga and a good home video recorder is enough to be starting off with. So go to it!

Not that conventional home video gear can't produce titles. However, the Amiga is far more flexible, can create a much wider range of styles, for individual looking titles. Also, an Amiga plus titling software is much, much cheaper than a dedicated piece of titling hardware which can produce similar results.

That's not all the Amiga can do though, not by a long chalk. As you are probably aware, the machine is capable of producing great

TOP TEN HINTS: VIDEO RECORDERS/TAPE



1 The age of a VTR is one indicator of how good the results will be. Modern machines have a better specification.

2 Digitising from existing video tape is an art. If the VTR can be advanced one frame at a time, then sequences can be digitised more easily, edited, and then re-recorded.

3 If you're in the market for a video, check out the spec thoroughly. Although many machines boast features like single frame editing, the small print often reveals the machine is not as accurate as the hype suggests.

4 Another feature to look for is how easy it is to control the video via an editing deck. You won't want to get one of these straight away, as they are as costly as the video themselves – but they are excellent.

5 Although the VHS system widely used in homes throughout the world is good enough for recording pure Amiga graphics, if you want to record 24-bit "True Colour" images then a more upmarket system is a must.

6 Whenever you copy video signals from one recorder to another, the picture quality goes down. Avoid extra 'generations' of tape unless you want surreal looking videos.

7 The best quality cuts using low budget VTRs are best done as follows; press record, play and pause on the machine that is recording, and play and pause on the player machine. Hit both pauses at the same time for your sequence to begin and end neatly.

8 Never handle video tape. The only reason you can get at it is to visually check whether the tape has been damaged by a faulty video machine.

9 Video tape isn't like film. You can't cut it up and splice it together. The only way to cut from one shot into the next is electronically. The cheap way is to pushthe buttons: the easy way is to control the video electronically.

10 As far as you can, use new tape that hasn't been recorded on to get the best results. You don't have to buy a whole new tape for each shot you do – but keep track of what parts of a tape have been used and what hasn't. Video tape degrades with use.

animations, using suitable software like *Deluxe Paint III* or *IV*. However, the longer a piece of animated video footage, the more complex it is to direct and control.

Semi-professional and even independent TV companies use the Amiga for everything from short, atmospheric 'descriptive' sequences on adverts, to cutting and chopping digitized images on pop videos. The latter use, sometimes known as 'scratch' or 'guerilla' video, was one of the reasons why famous artist Andy Warhol was drawn to the machine in the early years. A pity he died before producing much using the system.

Having said that, some people have gone even further, using graphics and images produced purely on the Amiga to form short films of perhaps 20 minutes (which is a big production in animation terms). The most notable of these is Tobias Richter, whose scale ranges from still slideshows regularly wowed at on the Public Domain circuit, to full-scale videos. Who knows, you might go on to produce even longer, better work.

It would be wrong, though, to suggest that the only videos you can produce are for the entertainment industry. There are two more equally important areas which are in many ways easier to break into, namely education and business. Video is one form of the art of communicating through moving pictures, but today it is a very widespread medium.

Pure education is probably the easiest area to create for, while at the same time being the most difficult to do well. There are educational videos on thousands of different subjects (there are even a few on using *Deluxe Paint*) but because of the huge variation in subject matter, finding the right audience is no easy task for even the most gifted producer.

If you want to go into this area, then the most obvious subject matter is a hobby or private study of your own. You can go for mainstream education, except that you can easily fall foul of the copyright laws by unwittingly using someone else's images.

If you stick to subject matter which a) you can produce good, original sequences for and b) not tread on anybody's intellectual property rights, then you have an ideal subject for a video, if not a dozen. Of course, tomorrow holds the promise of CDTV and CD-ROM – but today holds the guarantee of millions of video recorders all over the world.

Finally comes the most selective of areas, business communication videos. Companies are very, very fussy about how you portray them and their products through moving pictures – one minor slip can easily land you in a legal defamation case.

Having said that, most companies have at least ideas for how to get their message across at 25 frames per second, even if the vast majority lack the personnel and equipment to do so (very few businesses use Amigas as part of their day to day activities).

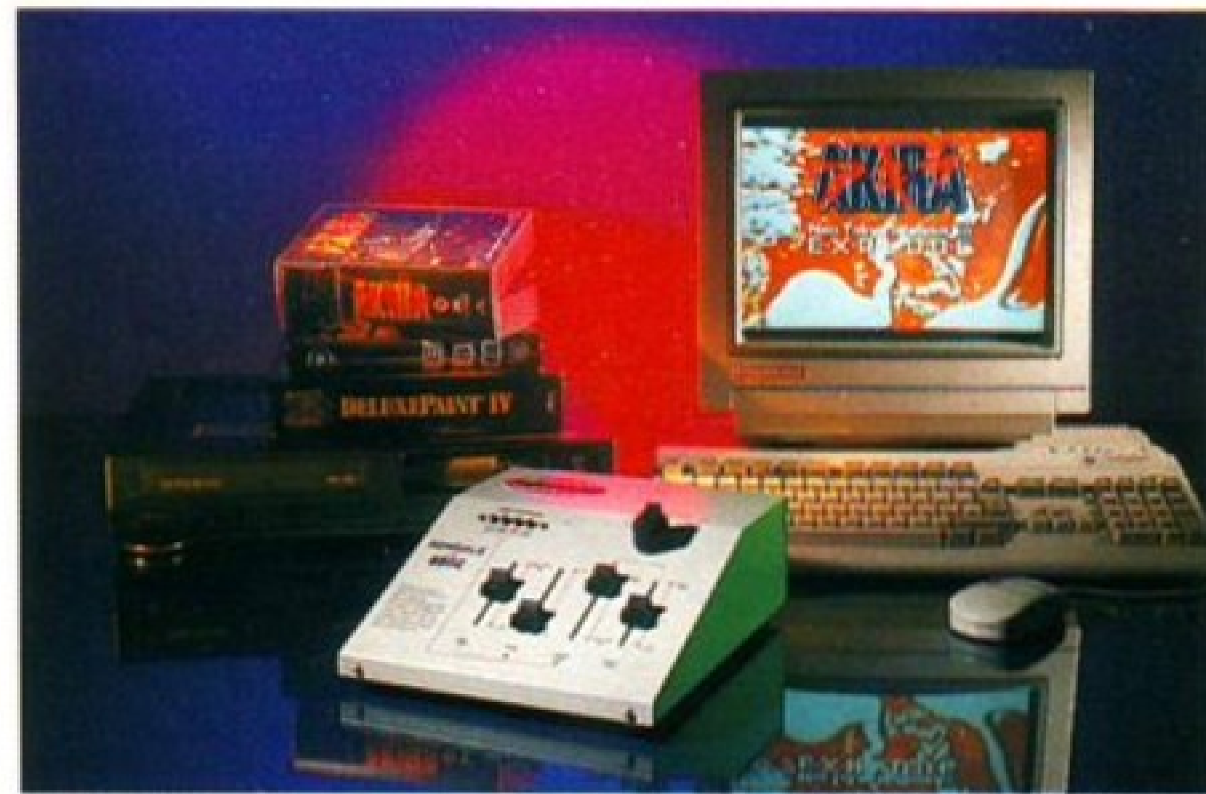
So business is an area to tread warily in, but the rewards are certainly there. These days, at trade fairs and conventions, it's not who has the best product who pulls the crowd – it's the stand with the best video presentation that gets all the attention. It will probably be the Amiga's ability to look and sound good, rather than multitasking or Workbench 2, that will persuade the captains of industry to take the machine to their heart.

Ok, that's a whistle stop tour of just where you can go to, starting with just an Amiga and a VTR. What about the other steps on the way? Do you need lots more video equipment, do you have to spend a fortune?

Yes and no. Broadcasting giants spend millions upon millions on TV and video production. Obviously, the more techniques you want to exploit, the more equipment you need to get that effect, that wipe, that shot. But it needn't necessarily be incredibly expensive. The reason for this is very simple. Hardware gets cheaper. Not just computers, but music systems, effects units, digitizers – and, of course, video systems.

If you start today, just where you'll end up? Maybe it'll be a quiet studio, doing the odd bit of animation and titling. Maybe you'll have your own video empire. The point is, unless you take the first step, you'll get nowhere.

HOW TO PLUG IN TO VIDEO



If you have an Amiga and a good video recorder, a genlock is a good buy. It enables you to mix Amiga graphics in with video images.

Take a good look at the back of your video recorder. Chances are, it's got two sockets – one marked "Video Out", the other "Video In". Usually, these connectors are of the Phono/RCA types, the same type of connector used for sound. Sometimes they are BNC types, which twist on and off in a similar manner to light bulbs. You can buy BNC/Phono convertors for only a few pounds.

The above are examples of composite video signals, which relay all the picture information through a single core of wire, surrounded by a shield return. Becoming ever more common is the Scart or Peritel connector, which has twenty one pins. As well as providing composite video, these connectors also give separate red, green and blue components, the synchronisation signal, and stereo sound. In addition a command pin is used, which has to be wired to the Amiga to convince the video that a signal is present.

In general, composite is easier to work with, although it doesn't give as good a quality as seperate feeds. There are more specialist connectors used on video recorders which use better systems than the now standard VHS (Super VHS for instance).

Exactly how you wire your Amiga to the video depends on what you want to do. If you have a modulator plugged in to your computer, you can just run a cable from the video out socket of the modulator to the video in of the recorder. Then you can video the picture from your Amiga. There is a composite video output on all Amigas – but this is black and white only on all machines except for the original A1000 and the brand new A600.

A better idea is to invest in a genlock. This can take in a video signal, and overlay the Amiga graphics on top. The original video picture shows through on blank areas of the Amgia graphics.

TOP TEN HINTS: VIDEO CAMERAS



1 A video camera which can itself record is known as a camcorder. Not all cameras have even this facility!

2 A video camera which can not record is ideal for using with a video digitiser, and cheap too. Black and white video cameras typically cost less than £100, and together with coloured filters and even a cheap digitiser can produce better results than a more expensive colour camera.

3 All video cameras boast loads of features. Some of them, like a built-in video titler, are pretty pointless if you have an Amiga. Don't buy what you don't need!

4 The most important part of any video camera is the lens. A camera with a good, simple lens will produce far better pictures than will a camera with a naff, macro/zoom lens, so the simpler option could well be the better one if the prices are similar. The latter type has its uses, but tends to be overused by beginners. Do consult the video magazines.

5 Camcorders suffer more abuse than VTRs. A simple, robust design is better for use in live situations than a fragile, expensive type.

6 Not sure what to buy? The best way to find the right design for you is to hire a camera out for a couple of days, and experiment.

7 Cameras need light to operate. The more light, the better. A lot of cameras boast they work in low light conditions – but very few work well.

8 One common mistake of home video enthusiasts is to fail to calibrate the camera using the white and black balance controls. If you don't, the colours just don't look right, as different lighting produces different colours.

9 An underexploited way of improving your videos is to use filters in front of the lens. Costing only a few pounds, the right filter can transform a boring, washed out shot into a lively, colourful shot.

10 Feel free to burn off video footage – video tape is actually pretty cheap nowadays – but always criticise your own work. Talent with a camera is built up gradually, learnt from many mistakes.


THALION

The AMIGA FORMAT Collection

No.8 RRP £100 **TVText** **CrossDOS**



FULL VIDEO TITLING PACKAGE! TVText: it must be the simplest way to give your videos the professional touch!

FILE EXCHANGE UTILITY! Cross-DOS: open you Amiga up to the outside world with this excellent utility.

● A 500 Plus Compatible ● 1Mb Required ●

TV*TEXT

So video titling is a total mystery to you, then, eh? But never fear – it's actually disgracefully simple. **Pat McDonald** provides a complete guide to making your very own video credits…

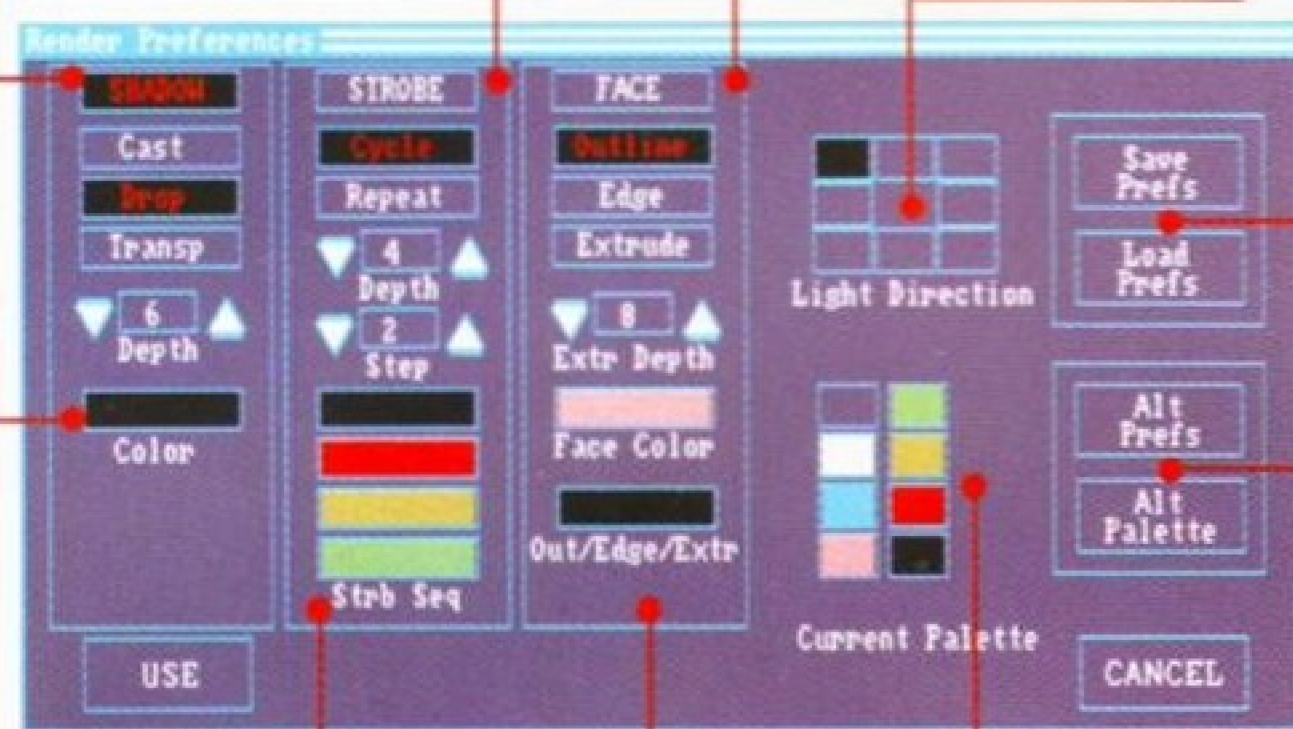
RENDERING PREFERENCES: THE HEART OF TV*TEXT

The three shadowing options all give a subtle variation of a shadow cast behind the main text. Although this is a bit of cliche, combined with just the right font, it can provide a certain atmosphere. Overuse makes it look very tacky indeed.

The Strobe option form a layer of colours behind the main title text. Don't set the Depth or Step too high, as your titles then tend to protrude right through the screen. Difficult to master.

Face is used for simple, plain titles. Edge will soften the outline without removing it completely, while extrude will turn the title into a solid three dimensional lump. For the most part use Outline.

The light direction is used to set which way the extrude and shadows work. Messing with this on the same title page leads to some bizarre optical illusions, so feel free to experiment.



The current Prefs can be saved out to the *TV*Text* disk, and reloaded at a later date. Make sure you have renamed the disk to *TV*Text*, otherwise these options won't work.

The shadow which a piece of text casts can be dispensed with, simply by selecting this, then the background colour. The shadow will then be totally invisible. The value above, the depth of shadow, can be adjusted to give the height of the text above the area where the shadow is cast.

The key to an effective strobe sequence is to set up a pallette with a few shades of the same colour. These can give much more depth to titles than a simple shadow.

The Face colour is the basic hue of the front of your title. The Out is the outline which surrounds the main text, and is usually best set to transparent, ie invisible.

The current palette. These cannot be changed through the Render prefs (it's a separate menu item). Just select a colour and then click on the pallette to change it.

If you have two different titles which use totally different palettes, you can use the alternative palette to compare them and see how well they match together. You cannot use these options to use more than eight colours at a time.

THE ESSENCE OF *TV*Text* is very simple. All it does is display text and still pictures in a form suitable for immediate recording on videotape. Its purpose is to enable you to add titles and credits to your own videos. You don't need a genlock or a video camera – just some footage to title.

This simplicity of purpose is carried over into how you use it. Each title is built up in layers, in a similar fashion to the way that an artist builds up a picture using many different elements. Just as a skilled artist can create a better picture, so a skilled title technician can produce professional-looking results.

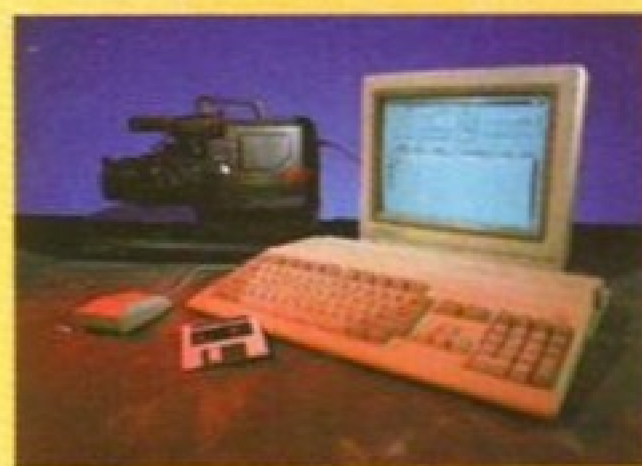
But first things first. The skill will come with time and with practice, so play around to your heart's content. And first, you'll need to know how to use the program.

GETTING STARTED

Here's how you get it going. First, load Workbench. Then take out the disk and insert a copy of the *TV*Text* disk. You should rename this disk to **TV*Text** (it will start off with the name MSDOS_Filesystem). Just click once on its icon with the left mouse button, then hold down the right mouse button and select Rename from the appropriate menu option. This is on the Workbench menu on 1.3 machines and earlier, and on the Icon menu on Workbench 2.

Double-click on the *TV*Text* icon, then again on the drawer marked *TV*Text*. There are two versions of the program on the disk – one that operates in high resolution (640 pixels horizontally, interlaced) while the other works in medium resolution (640 X 200 for NTSC,

TOP TEN HINTS: AMIGA



1 Don't think that making a video takes the same amount of time as the video actually plays. The ration of production time versus playing time varies from about 3: 1 for simple titling, up to hundres or even thousands to one for complex animations.

2 With the above point firmly in mind, make a humble beginning - a small set of titles for a family video with TV*Text, or a simple, short, black and white cartoon composed of just a few shots.

3 Start small. Get the message? Too many people aim for too much too quickly, get discouraged and stop the hobby before it's even started.

4 After one or two efforts, plan something a little more ambitious. Decide on WHO will watch it. Good TV and video succeeds not because of the actors, the script or the production - but on finding the right audience and knowing their tastes.

5 Your potential audience decides the subject for your work. Twelve year olds don't want to watch business presentations. Company directors will not be impressed by childish cartoons. Well, possibly not.

6 Pure Amiga graphics, while excellent in their own way, do not compare with video when it comes to subtle colouration. Don't just digitize sequences, and re-video them. Put some alterations in with a paint package, to enhance the basic moving pictures.

7 Amiga graphics on their own do have their own distinct flavour. Either practise on your own art skills, or find an artist with their own styles. 3D ray tracing is the only "pure computer" form of moving pictures, and it's a very effective technique.

8 Grab every opportunity to do more work. If some project is going to cost, get the money up front, even if it's for something pretty trivial like titling a local band's live video. You deserve your keep, just like the BBC, NBC and others.

9 Study television. Yes, I know most of it's dire but by appreciating other people's work, you can begin to understand most of the basic techniques without enrolling on a night school course (also a good idea, come to think of it).

10 Be individual! If it's true that every person has at least one good story to tell, then it's also true that every person has at least one good video production just waiting to be discovered.

Those Menu Items in full

```
Project              Edit        Text              Justify          Render            Draw        Background         Video
Load Picture...      Undo  U     Fonts...     F      Free       D   New Text...    E  Line        Clear Screen  Z    ✓Interlace
Save Picture...      Cut   X     Sizes...     S    ✓Center      M   Last Text      A  Box         Tile               Hide Ptr   K
Load Overlay...      Copy  C     Styles              Left       [   Overlay...     Y  Circle      Wallpaper          Screen Size
Save Overlay...      Resize      Rotation            Right      ]   Preferences... R  Ellipse     Grid
Hide Title     T                   AutoSize          Grid       G   Palette...     H  Erase       Gradation...
Delete File...                   Libraries... L      Vertical   V                     Line Size
Print                                              Grid Size
About...
Quit           Q
```

PROJECT MENU

Load Picture: This has two sub options, straight load or auto colour. The latter will remap the picture into the present palette as best it can.
Save Picture: Dumps the current screen to an IFF file.
Load Overlay: Loads in a picture, but leaves all areas with colour zero transparent, so previous work is not obscured. Again, has an auto colour option.
Save Overlay: Saves a portion of the current screen, which you mark out with the mouse.
Show Title: Obviously you don't want a title bar recorded at the top of your titles. This options hides and reveals it.
Delete File: Used to wipe a file from a disk. Use with caution.
Print: Dumps the current screen to a printer.
About: Tells you who wrote the program.
Quit: Gets you out of *TV*Text*.

EDIT MENU

Undo: Reverts the screen back to where it was before you entered the last element. Warning! Some options do not Undo.
Cut: Used to blank an area of the screen market out with the mouse.
Copy: Used to paste an area of the screen (which you mark out with the mouse) to a different part of the screen.
Resize: First, choose what type of Resize you want. Then mark out an area - it will be cut out and resized automatically.

TEXT MENU

Fonts: Select a different font and size.
Sizes: Select a different size of the current font in use.
Styles: Used to underline, bolden or italicize text.
Rotation: Useful for flipping areas through 90 degrees. Can be used to stretch areas through 45 degrees, but it's not too good.
Autosize: Handy for customizing the present font to fit into an exact area.
Libraries: Used to load fonts from somewhere other than the *TV*Text* disk.

JUSTIFY MENU

Free: Text will be placed wherever you want it to be.
Centre: Text will be aligned with the centre of each line in mid-screen.
Left: Text will be left justified.
Right: Text will be right justified.
Grid: Text will be aligned with a grid.
Vertical: Text will be aligned vertically.
Grid Size: Used to change the size of the justify grid.

RENDER MENU

New Text: You can now enter a new line of text for rendering.
Last Text: Go back to the last line of text you entered.
Overlay: Load in an IFF screen, auto colour it and render it to have bevelled edges.
Preferences: See separate box.
Palette: Change the colours *TV*Text* displays. Avoid excessively bright colours as these do not record properly on video recorders.

DRAW MENU

Line: Renders a horizontal or vertical line.
Box: Renders a box.
Circle: Renders a circle.
Ellipse: Renders an ellipse.
Erase: Blanks an area of the screen.
Line Size: Choose the thickness of lines for future drawing operations.

BACKGROUND MENU

Clear Screen: Wipes your work away, ready to be redone.
Tile: First you mark out an area, which is then automatically tiled (repeated) to fill the whole screen. Use with caution.
Wallpaper: Similar to tile, except that vertical bands are put onto the screen.
Grid: Similar to tile, but tries to fit the tile into square blocks.
Gradation: Has several sub choices. Basically it puts up a pretty copper (colour bar) background for you to draw over. Not terribly useful, especially if you have a genlock.

VIDEO MENU

Interlace: Turns interlace mode on or off. It is brest kefyt off when working because of the flicker, but should be on when you are recording onto tape, because it is the same quality as a TV display.
Hide Pointer: Hides the mouse pointer.
Screen Size: Changes the resolution at which *TV*Text* works. To avoid cut off areas, you should choose the biggest area you possibly can unless you can't spare the chip RAM.

256 for PAL). Double-click on the one you want to load the program.

For your first few attempts, try selecting New Text from the Render menu, and type in a line. Click on OK, and position the text where you want it to go. Clicking the left mouse button again will paste down the text – the right button will abort that particular line of text and let you type in another line. Don't worry, you can get your old text back by selecting Last Line from the Render Menu.

One final point. You can make more fonts available to *TV*Text* by copying them to the ZumaFonts drawer on the disk, but an easier way is to load them from a disk called Fonts:.

COMPROMISED STANDARDS

At first glance, *TV*Text* doesn't appear to use the capabilities of the Amiga to the full. After all, the machine can display 4096 colours, albeit in low resolution, so why does the program limit you to just eight colours in high resolution?

The answer is twofold. First, high resolution titles look a lot less jagged edge than low resolution, so the program defaults to that standard. Second, high resolution limits you to 16 colours. So the program has to have a limited palette.

"But why doesn't it use 16 colours then?" you ask. Well, Amigas with only half a megabyte of chip RAM have great difficulty working in 16 colours at high resolution. They just haven't got enough workspace to keep their pictures in. Try setting *Deluxe Paint* to 16 colour high resolution mode – I bet you it doesn't work, and you'll be lucky to get eight.

Note that it's unwise to use colours which are too bright. Video tape is very fussy about what colours it records, and bleeding reds or patterned greens/blues are an eyesore when the tape is played back.

TOP TEN HINTS: MIXERS/EDIT SUITES



1 Top of the pile in terms of video add ons are video mixers. These enable you to make smooth transitions from one sequence to another, without sudden cuts.

2 Edit suites are another rather pricey extra. Edit suites are glorified controllers for video recorders and cameras, enabling one scene to be seamlessly joined to another.

3 Edit suites are a little pointless unless you actually know where the cuts are going to happen. You can wing it with an edit suite, but careful planning (story boards and so forth) is necessary to use them efficiently.

4 Expensive but invaluable, video mixers are often overused by the novice, as each scene swirls into the next. The current crop of TV viewers are mostly unused to leaping, dancing, swirling shots which mixers produce when used too much.

5 More types of each extra are becoming available all the time. However, different manufacturers use different standards to plug one video machine into another, so if you are aiming for either it makes sense to check what your video equipment can take.

6 The Video Toaster is an Amiga card, only available to A1500s and A2000s. It caused a storm when the NTSC version was launched - I understand that a PAL version is finally in the works. This card enables you to both mix and fade between different video sources, as well as having a built in 24 bit graphics board plus bundled ray tracing software.

7 Better software is becoming available all the time to help you to use the Amiga as an edit suite, although currently most of this software is very expensive. *Show Maker, Scala MM 200, Syntronix* and (at the top) *Sympatica* are all aimed at the more professional video user.

8 However, bigger and better software requires a bigger and better Amiga to use effectively. If you achieve a good success rate, chances are you'll want to upgrade to an accelerated, large memory machine with a hard disk (A3000 preferred).

9 Bigger ideas are a natural progression as you get more into video. It's an area that can take you from being an amateur to being a professional within a very short space of time.

10 So think big! Next time the credits roll and the opening scene begins, it could be your work that entertains millions. At the samne time, always remember that it's worth getting titling done for the humblest home vid.

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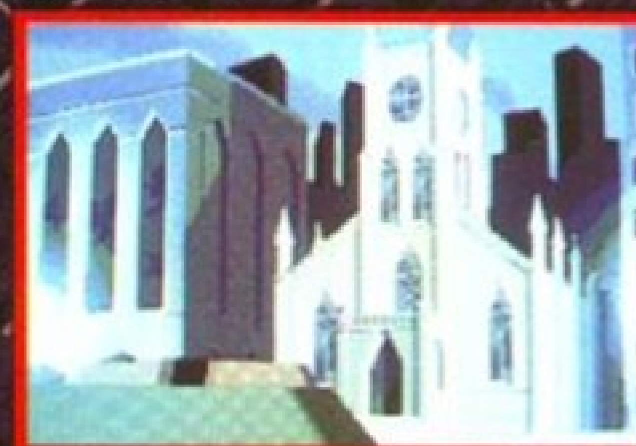
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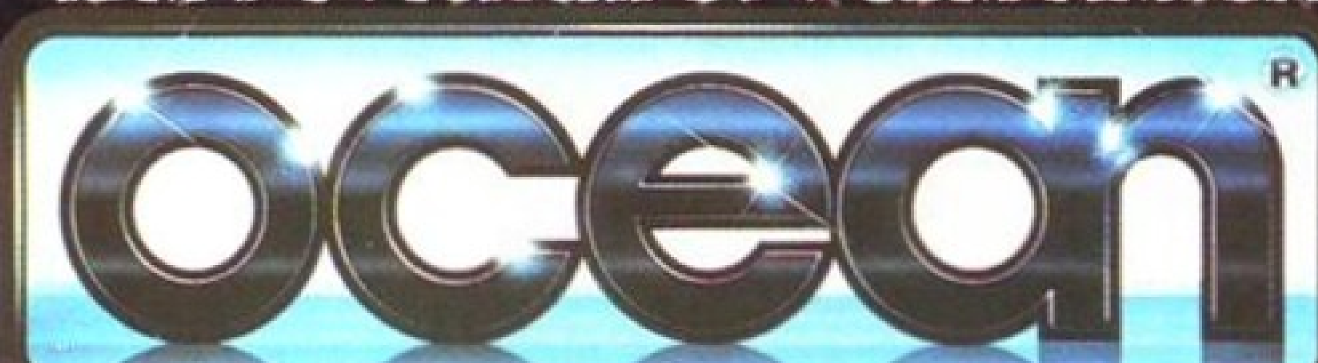






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CrossDos

Part two of this month's Amiga Format Collection is a hyper-useful file-exchange utility that will enable you and your Amiga to make the most of other computing worlds. **Pat McDonald** guides the tour...

SO WHAT EXACTLY is *CrossDos*? Basically, it's a program that enables you to read from and write to disks formatted by IBM PC compatibles and Atari STs.

It isn't, however, an emulator. Let's face it, the Amiga being the machine it is, it doesn't really need to pretend to be another computer, especially since the release of Workbench 2 and new programs that conform to WB2 standards. The quality of such software is so high that you wouldn't want to use anything else.

So why *CrossDos* then? Well, despite the fact that the Amiga is a very capable machine, it is not regarded as the 'standard' platform in that there are simply not enough of them around in business. The computer that rules is the IBM PC.

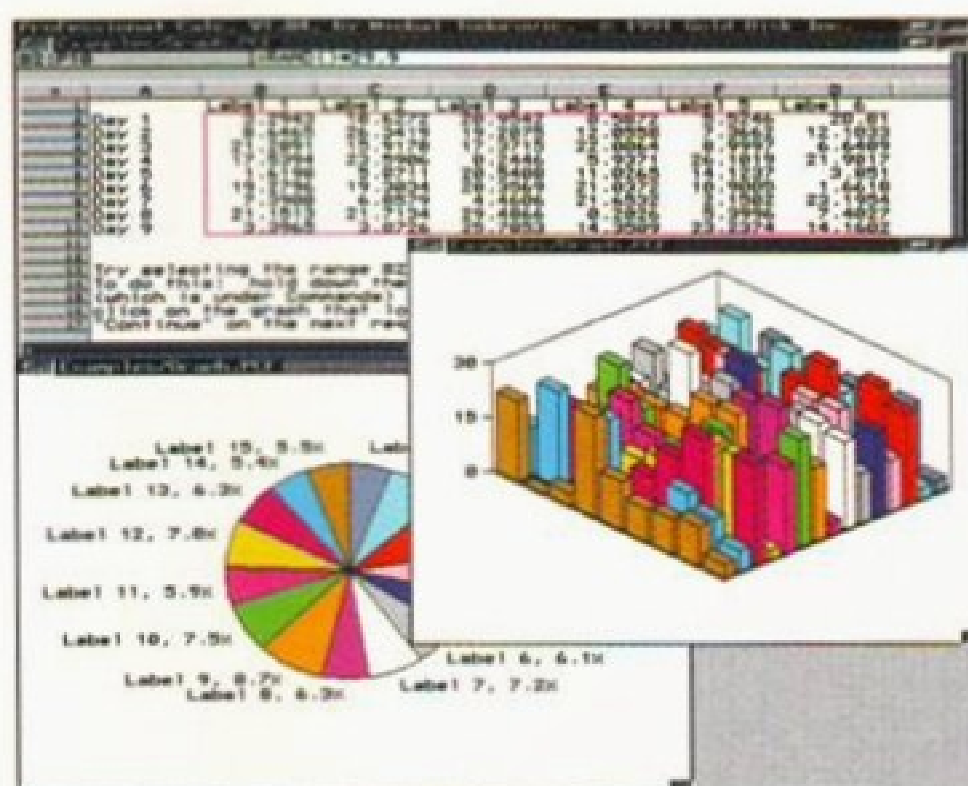
CrossDos was created to help out, by enabling you to access data stored on 720K or 360K 3.5-inch disks, put there by IBM PCs. This means that people who use PCs in the office can come home to their Amigas, transfer across data from their PC disks and continue using the same data on compatible packages. By 'compatible', I mean programs that are able to manipulate files saved in alien formats.

Say you work at an office that uses the Lotus *1-2-3* spreadsheet package on a PC. Now when you've finished at the office, but still need to continue with your work, you can save it to a disk and take it home to your Amiga and use a package like *Professional Calc* which can utilise the Lotus *1-2-3*-format files.

The data exchange principle doesn't just stop at spreadsheet files, as you will see later. You can transfer just about anything from the PC to the Amiga using some kind of package to read the data, from word processor documents to CAD drawings.

Programs and File Compatibility

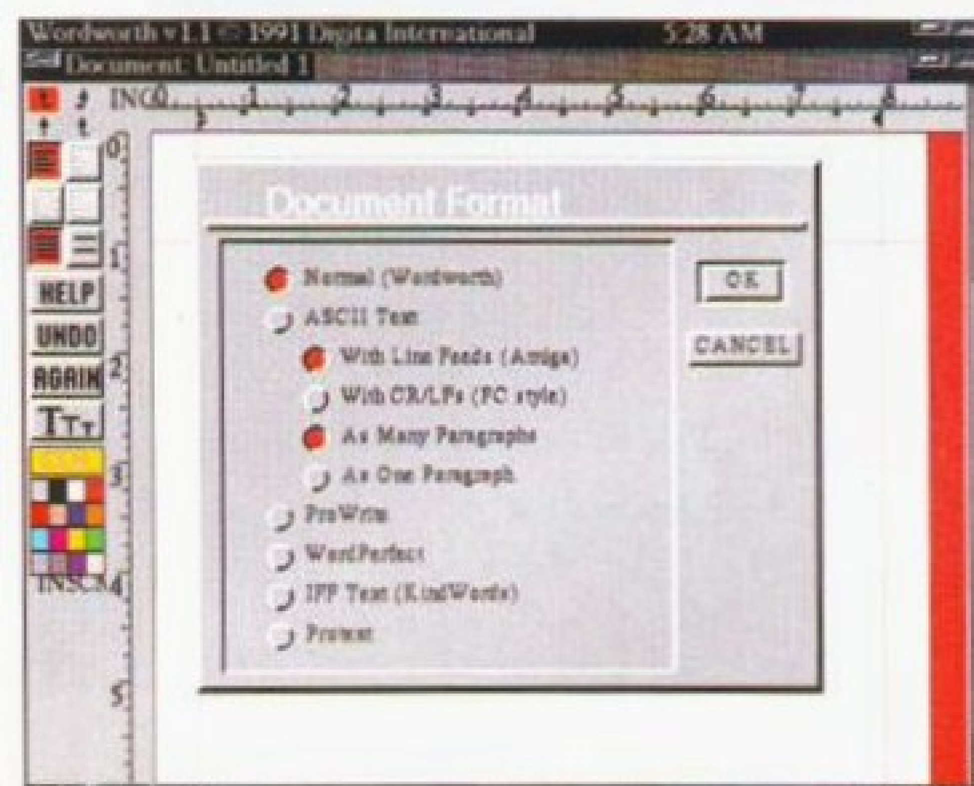
So just what files can you use with what packages on the Amiga? Well, there are quite a few programs that offer you the facility to use files from PCs, STs and Macs, it just depends what you want to do. Let's look at a few categories...



The Amiga turns into a Lotus eater as it takes on files from the PC's well-popular *1-2-3* software suite.

SPREADSHEETS

Lotus *1-2-3* on the PC is a combined spreadsheet and database program. On the Amiga you can import *1-2-3* files into *MaxiPlan*, *Superbase Professional 4* and perhaps the star of the show here, *Professional Calc* from Gold Disk. *ProCalc* is probably the best spreadsheet available for the Amiga and can import Lotus files just as easily as if you were loading a standard .PCF *ProCalc* file. Apart from this, due to the Amiga interface, it is a lot easier using *ProCalc* than *1-2-3* ever was.



Use the office PC to start your Pulitzer Prize winning novel, finish it at night on your Amiga with *Wordworth*.

WORD PROCESSORS

There are loads of WPs on the PC, from *WordPerfect* to MicroSoft *Word*. The Amiga has an equivalent *WordPerfect*, so you can load files produced on the PC, and vice versa. *Wordworth* has a fair supply of import and export loaders, so you can import, edit and then save text on to a PC disk to continue work back on the PC. We use *Protext* to write for pure speed, and then convert this for use on the Apple Macintosh using *Apple File Exchange*.

Continued overleaf

HOW CROSS DOS WORKS

CrossDos works by installing a disk-drive handler and a new file system handler on to your Amiga.

The first of these, the file 'mfm.device' is installed into your DEVS: directory. This file is a drive handler that interprets the nine sector format that PC disks employ (it's different from the Amiga's), so the drive can read the disks.

The second file, 'msdos-filesystem', is installed into the 'L: handlers' directory. This takes the data the the 'mfm.device' has read from the disk and translates the file format into something that AmigaDos can understand. Of course it works the other way too, when writing data to a PC disk.

Once installed, the drives can be mounted from the mountlist 'mountlist.msdosfs' that also goes in your DEVS: directory. This sets up an assignation that enables you to put a PC disk in one of your drives and access it as you would a normal AmigaDOS disk.

For a normal disk in your internal drive you would simply refer to it as DF0:. When you put a PC disk in, if you do this, it will produce a 'NOT A DOS DISK' error, because it is of course not in AmigaDOS format. Therefore you have to access it as DI0: or whatever you have named it in the mountlist, eg PC0:.

Again if you refer to an AmigaDOS disk as DI0:, it will produce the same error. In this way, you can see that saving and loading from PC disks is transparent to the user, you just access the drive according to what type of disk is inserted.

So if you wanted to copy the entire contents of a PC disk to RAM:, from the Shell you would type: copy from DI0:#? to RAM:

There is one more consideration you have to make when writing to PC disks, in that the filenames can only be eight characters long plus a three-character extension. The format this takes is FILENAME.EXT, so if you did try to save two files with the names Filenumber01 and Filenumber02, the handler would rename your first file to FILENUMB.ER0. See the problem? By copying the second file, you would overwrite the first as it would also be renamed FILENUMB.ER0. As you can see you have to be careful here.

Finally a word about icons. Icons on the Amiga have a '.info' extension. On a PC disk this is renamed as a '.INF' file. Thankfully the filesystem handler is intelligent enough to work out if files named this way are icons or not and hence will display them in a Workbench window if required.

But *CrossDos* doesn't stop at PC disks. You can also exchange data with Macintoshes and Atari STs. How?

The Atari ST uses the same format for disks that the PC does (720K arranged as 80 tracks of nine sectors). So this means that you can use any data from an ST as well. Say you have an Amiga but no printer, but a friend with an ST does. In this case you could format a disk using *CrossDos* and save a document to the disk, take it to your friend's house, insert it into his ST and print it out.

The Macintosh comes with a utility called *Apple File Exchange*. This enables the Mac to read and write to PC format disks just as *CrossDos* does for the Amiga. Which also means that you can exchange data with the Macintosh computer too. We transfer copy from the Amiga, via a PC disk, to the Mac in this way.

As you can see, *CrossDos* is indeed a very powerful tool, and can be very useful for data exchange in lots of circumstances. See the box on how it works for more information on its actual operation, and read the relevant bits about various programs that have data compatibility for the area of your interest.

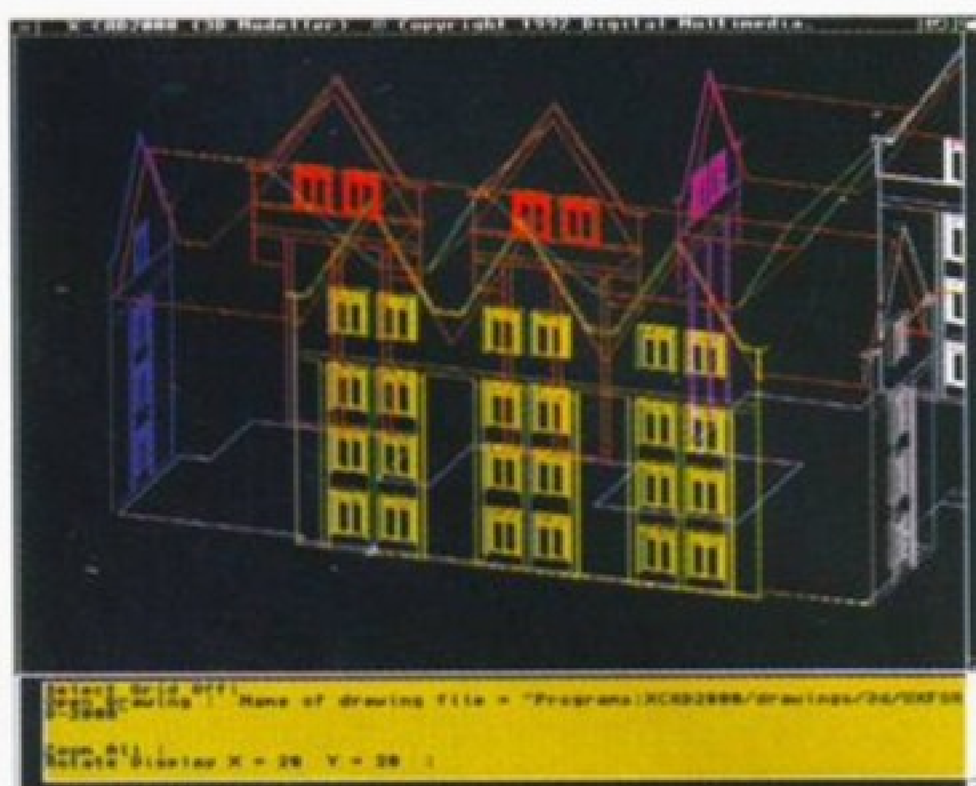
So how do I use it? The first time you put a PC disk into your drive you will have to literally tell your Amiga that this is no normal disk, but a PC disk. The way to do this is to use the icons on the coverdisk, Attach_DI0: and Attach_DI1:. These icons automatically tell your computer to load in the device handlers from the coverdisk so your Amiga can understand the data.

This is all very well, but advanced users may want to automate this process so you don't have to keep using the coverdisk all the time to use PC disks. In order for this to work, there are a few files that you will need to copy on to your system disk (hard drive or whatever you boot from). These are mfm.device and mountlist.msdosfs from DEVS: on the Coverdisk to your corresponding DEVS: directory, msdosfilesystem from L: on the Coverdisk to the corresponding L: directory on your system disk. The last files you need to copy are MountMF and the two tdpatch files from the C: directory on the Coverdisk to your own C: directory.

The hardest part is just a case of editing the mountlist.msdosfs and telling it where all the files can now be found, i.e. where you have placed them on your system.

Then all you need to do in order for your Amiga to mount the PC drives automatically is put the MountMF command somewhere in your startup-sequence (or WBStartup on WB2) before the loadwb command. This will automount all the available floppy drives you have as dual Amiga/PC drives. Ergo DF0; will be DI0: for the PC and all others will be DIx:, where x is the unit number of your disk drive, assuming they are connected.

There are a few more utilities on the coverdisk which will help you in handling PC disks, such as *Dr CrossDos*, and a technical reference manual for more details on how this program works. Read the Readme file for more info.



Build a house, sports complex, world domination centre of operations using CAD, *CrossDos*, an Amiga and a PC.

COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN (CAD)

In the main, the PC has the lead in this area. And the main PC format for Computer Aided Design (CAD) drawings is *AutoCAD*'s DXF file format.

Not to be outdone however, the Amiga also has packages such as *X-CAD* (and now *X-CAD 2000* – turn to page 176 for the full review in this very issue) and *DynaCADD* that can import and edit these DXF files so you can manipulate drawings created on the PC.



***Art Department Professional* on the Amiga combined with *CrossDOS* can open up whole new worlds to you.**

GRAPHICS

There are numerous graphics formats around: PC GIF files, LBM *DPaint*-PC files, PCX files, TIFFs and more. The Mac has TIFFs, PICTs, *MacPaint* files and more. STs have Degas and Neochrome files. The Amiga is well able to cope via the superb *Art Department Professional 2. ADPro* enables you to convert and manipulate all these formats apart from PICTs. For these though there is a program called *RasterLink*, which converts pictures IFFs, then into *DPaint* for editing.



***PageStream* page layout and *CrossDos*. Import files from Macs and PCs for some really fit looking pages.**

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

As far as import modules are concerned, *PageStream* 2.2 is the best. It can import graphics from the PC, Mac and ST, and can also import text from most of the popular wordprocessors across platforms. You can also load in IBM-EPS and Mac-EPS files to import into documents, and you can also save your documents as PostScript files to port over to Macs or PCs to print from if you don't have a printer connected to your Amiga.

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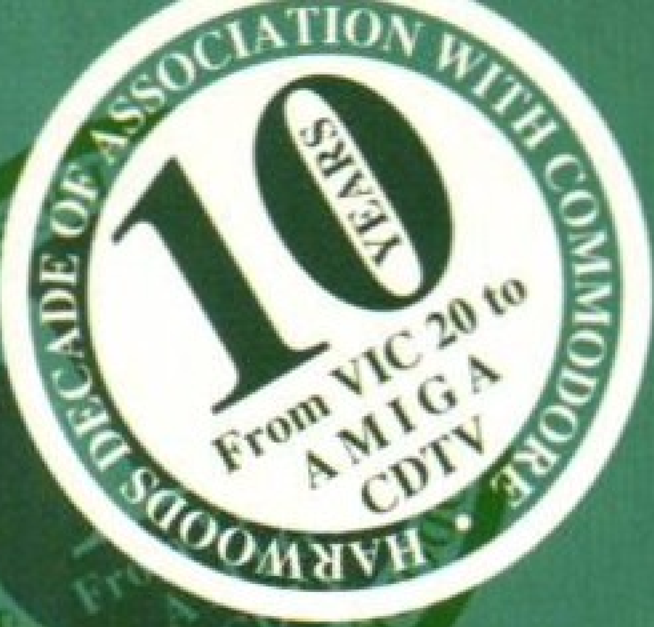
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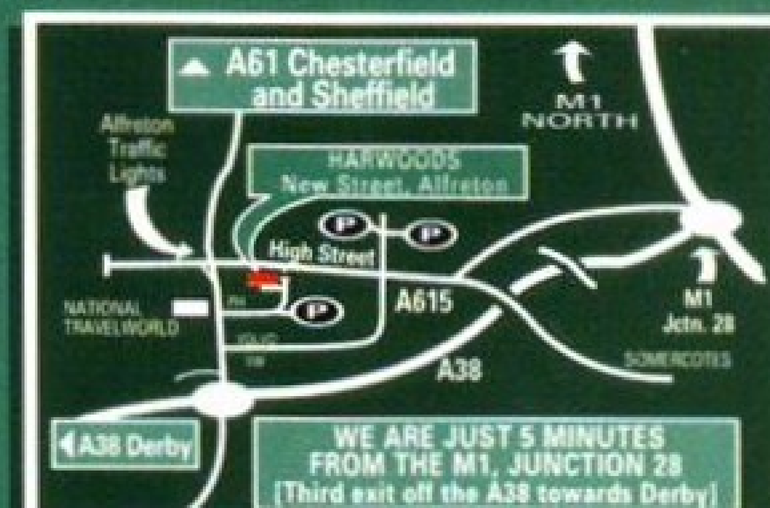
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Screenplay

Into games? Then look no further. This is the part of the magazine where you'll find out what's really happening on the games-scene. Everything from the hottest hits to the duffest disks get the Third Degree from our reviewers.

SIZE IS EVERYTHING

As you probably already know, you're now reading the biggest-selling computer magazine in the UK – that's not just Amiga, that's every format. **Neil Jackson**, Screenplay's Editor explains why this is good news for you.

"It's true! Unbelievable, but true. We've been at the top of the computer magazine-charts before, but now things are getting silly. An breath-taking 161,256 people read *Amiga Format* every month, and the figure is rising.

We can understand why – we've always been straight with our readers, and they've always headed straight for us – but we still can't begin to comprehend just how big the Amiga market is getting.

For instance, did you know that *Amiga Format* is now the biggest magazine in the male-interest market?

We outsell car mags, hi-fi mags and music mags month after month.

But this means we have a massive responsibility to you, our readers. You're the biggest collection of games-playing people the world has ever seen, and you're worthy of the best.

So we have a few strict in-house rules which make sure you always get what you're entitled to:

(A) If it ain't finished, it don't get reviewed
(B) If it's garbage, we say so, no matter what the softies think of us
(C) If we have to take sides, it's always your side we take.

THE REVIEWERS

We've been busy like you'd never believe this month, but still we all manage to find time for a few relaxing games outside work. Here's what's keeping the troops happy this month...

CLARE HODGSON
"I've been playing my favouritist of favourite shoot-em-ups, *St Dragon*. It's lovely. It's got lots of winding tails and shiny jaguar thingies and you kill everything a lot. 'Sgreat."

ANDY NUTTALL
"Sensible Soccer, without a doubt. Quite a lot actually. In fact I think I've been playing it far too much for my own good. What day is it?"

ASAM AHMAD
"*Zool*, mate, that's what I've been playing. Why? 'Cos it's really slick, just like my hair."

JAMES LEACH
"Sorry, I know I'm a sad old git and all that, and I haven't changed my mind for months, but I'd still kill for a few laps of *Formula One Grand Prix*."

ED RICKETTS
"I've been messing about with the course of history, me. Give me an hour or two, a copy of Civilization, and that's me hooked for days."

NEIL WEST
"I'd have to disagree with Asam – his hair may be like an oil-slick, but *Zool* is even slicker. Slickening, really, innit?"



Hook-up and party on

There's a certain type of game that nobody can call anti-social – the kind where loads of people play on specially-linked Amigas. Are hook-up games the future of entertainment? How can you join the new revolution? To find out, flip to... **Page 66**

THE BEST OF THE REST – THIS MONTH'S TOP TITLES

RoboSport

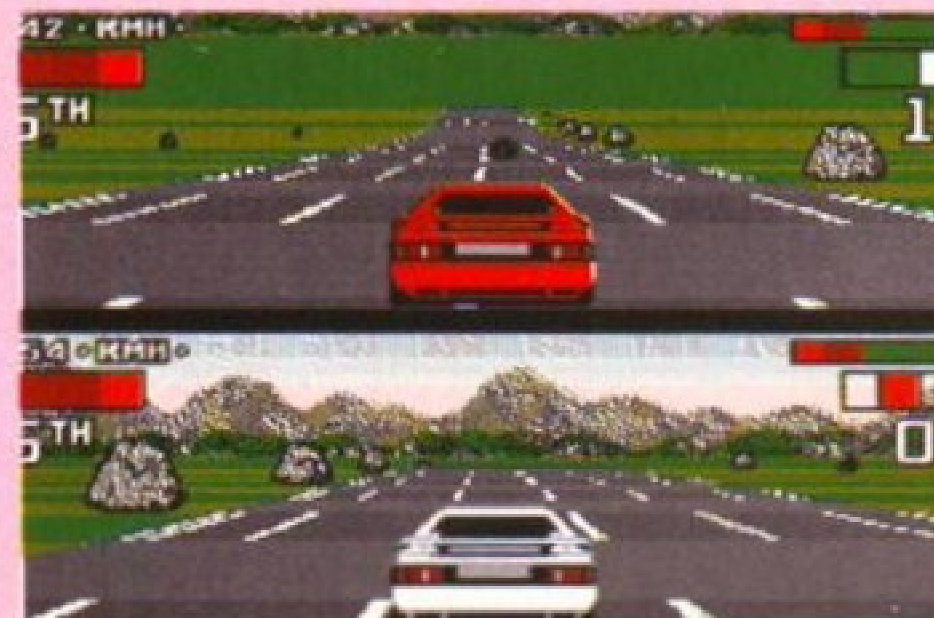


This storming new multi-player hook-up game from Maxis takes everything they learned from Sim Earth and dumps it out the window. *RoboSport* is faster, brighter and more aggressive than anything they've done before. And what's more, it's got room for real people to fight real battles against each other. The war starts on... **Page 70**

Putty



True blue and bouncy too, *Putty* is Commodore's own choice for the new A600 pack. Have they picked a winner with System 3's new blobby baby? Will it help the Amiga leap to even higher heights? Check out what we made of the sticky blue ball, as we pull all the fluff off it and stretch a point too far on... **Page 82**



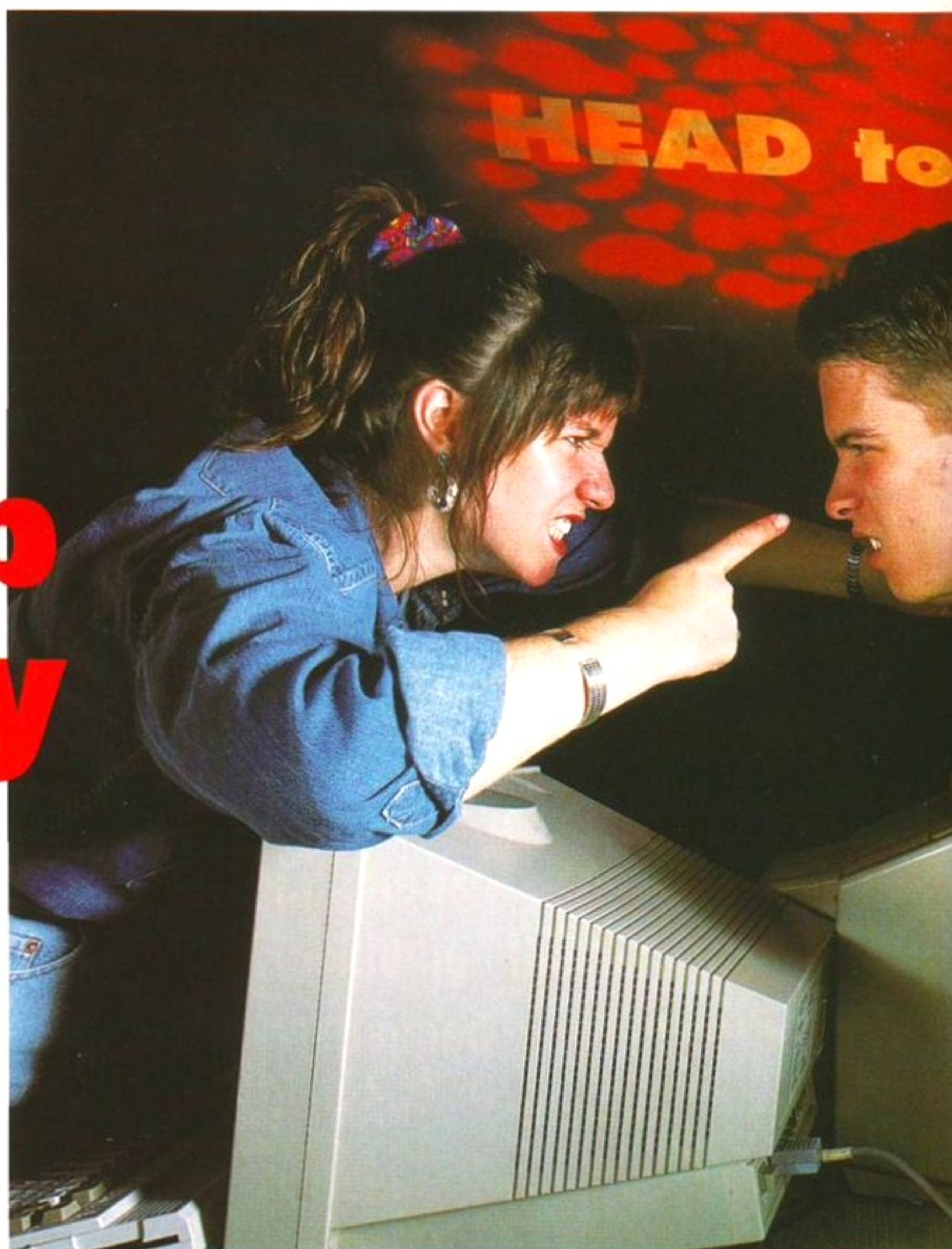
Lotus: The Ultimate Challenge
As the first of Gremlin's new racers takes to the streets we take it for a road test. Is it a *Crazy Cars* beater, a Jag-jostler, or just a Skoda in Esprit's clothing? Put your pedal to the metal and hang on round the bends, as we spray a few gallons of gas on... **Page 72**



James Pond's Aquatic Games
Millennium's fish-like secret agent spins off into the crazy world of damp Olympics. There's plenty of fun and flipper-waggling to be had but is it as good as *Robocod 2*? We go swimmingly to... **Page 94**

Everyone knows computer games are fun, but wouldn't they all be more fun if you had the satisfaction of playing and beating friends instead of a half-wit machine? **Neil Jackson** discovers that sociable games-playing is the way forward for the Amiga.

Hook-up and play



The one thing you *can't* say about hook-up games is that they're antisocial. Rowdy, competitive and highly entertaining for up to four people, yes, but anti-social? Never!

You've probably heard all the arguments against computer games so many times it makes you sick: "They encourage reclusiveness," say the psychotherapists (eager to make parents worry about their poor kid's grey matter and force them to book some appointments). "The addictive nature of some games is as bad as drugs," say the doctors (who seem to love applying their doom-laden medical lingo to inanimate, inconsequential, but never intravenous, computer equipment). "They turn children into violent, homicidal maniacs who look upon death and destruction as the primary solution," say the worried parents (anxious that their young'un isn't going to turn into a Michael Ryan or some other travelling psychopath). Why is everyone "on the outside" so hung up about computer games? Because most of us "do it" on our own, that's why.

That's the biggest problem society really has with computer games. Most of us know just what to expect from a game and we're happy to enjoy it with the same level of belief that we reserve for Neighbours, but with a far greater level of involvement. The remainder of society, (generally the computer-phobics and the techno-illiterates) look in in disbelief because we're not 'communicating' with each other, and there's this worrying absence of 'social interaction'. Cobblers! Nobody moans about the amount of time people spend propped up in front of the telly anymore (though they used to years ago), and computer-users are generally far more discerning about the material they watch or use. How many hours of society's time is wasted by people watching trash on the box because "there's nothing else on." Probably millions, but nobody says anything anymore because we're all used to it.

The new generation

And now we enter the new regime of computer gaming: plenty of TV airtime devoted to computer games, and new programmes being planned every month as the TV companies attempt to tap the market that's always been there, but they've been to busy to notice or take seriously. The age of the computer-spotty is almost gone. The 13 year-old kid with his face full of acne and his anorak pockets full of cassettes is no more – we've moved into an era of pony-tailed ad-men playing hand-helds on tube-trains, and middle-managers playing *Leisure Suit Larry* on the office PC when the MD's not looking. But still the image of computer games as mind-rotting, antisocial diseases persists.

When you think about it, it's easy to see why this myth continues. But still there are precious few really sociable games that people can get together and play. Your granny (who's probably not exactly a whizz with *Wizkid*) may harken back to the days where "the whole fam-

HOW DO HOOK-UP GAME WORK

The method behind hook-up games might seem complex, but is actually not that difficult for a programmer to do. When separate machines are connected together via a modem or a null-modem cable, data can be passed from one machine to another at high speeds. Both computers run identical copies of the game, and each one receives and transmits data along the connection.

The data transmitted by each computer is limited to simple information about the player's current position, the direction he is facing or moving in game world, and perhaps a bit of synchronisation data (which keeps the computers running at the same game-speed). Other information transmitted may consist of data about the player's action – such as the fact that he's crashed or is firing a weapon.

At the other end of the connection, your opponent's computer is gathering the data you're transmitting and doing a few quick tests on it. Has your transmitted position effectively moved you to a spot which your opponent can see? If it has, then your opponent's software draws you on to his screen, just like any other in-game baddy. If not, the opposing computer ignores you. If you're firing, your opponent's machine works out whether he can see the bullets, and whether he's been hit, and incorporates this into his display. At the same time, the other machine is sending the same kind of information to you, and your software updates your display. In this way, only small chunks of data get sent over the cable thus minimising the amount of computing time needed to work out where everyone is in the game-world. The computers only actually bother about human-enemy positions when they're within visual range of each other – the rest of the time the game functions just like it does in one-player mode.



ily used to gather around the piano and sing songs together", with tears in her eyes as she watches you trying to beat the fifth end-of level beasty on *Apidya*. And we can hardly blame her – the last words you probably said to her were "hmmm, yeah. Damn! Missed him", or something similar – not the epitome of sociability really.

Two's company Three's a party

If you look hard enough (or just glance around over the next few pages) you'll find there is a hidden wealth of human-vs-human fun that you can have with your Amiga. Two-player games have been around since the earliest *Boot Hill* and *Pong* coin-ops (though the trend has moved away from head-to-head action towards the ubiquitous one-up, two-up style which is less exciting), and there are oodles of shoot-em-ups that offer the chance to beat your mates. But the really good multi-player games are the ones they call 'hook-up' games – where two or more players play against each other in real-time using several computers linked together by a cable.

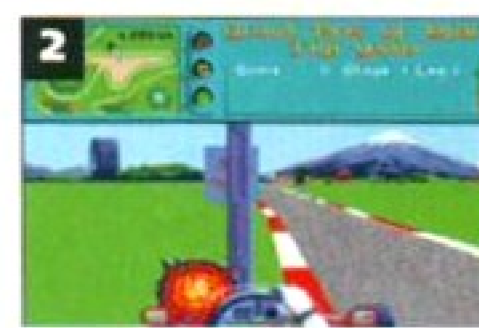
The principle is simple: instead of sharing the same computer, each player gets a whole

Continued overleaf

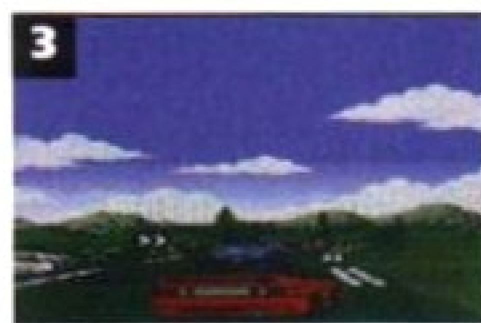
The Unofficial Amiga Format Top 16 Hook-up Games



1 Air Warrior
ONLINE ENTERTAINMENTS (081 536 6763)
Undoubtedly the best telephone hook-up game ever. You'll need a modem, but up to 40 people can fly this incredible simulation at once.



2 Vroom
UBISOFT
The *other* classic formula one-style racing game. But with this one, plus a null-modem link, two players can battle it out head-to-head on all the major circuits of the world.



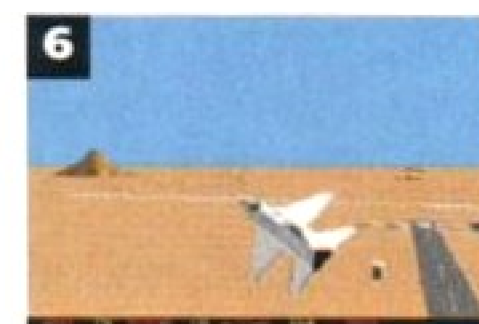
3 Lotus 2
GREMLIN GRAPHICS
Peachy street-racing action for one, but with a null-modem link, up to four players can tear off down the highway. A real party game, much loved by off-duty policemen.



4 DynaBlaster BomberMan
UBISOFT
A crazy, exploding variation of *PacMan*, this classic game enables up to five people to play using the supplied four-player joystick adaptor.



5 RoboSport
OCEAN/MAXIS
Paintball skirmish meets the Amiga in this incredibly versatile hook-up game. With a null-modem link, a modem or an Ethernet add-on, up to four people can play.



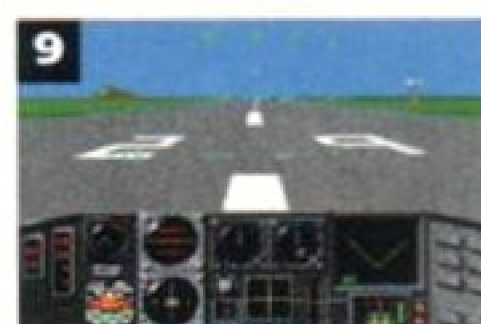
6 Falcon
DIGITAL INTEGRATION
Superb dogfighting action is yours for the taking in this excellent flight simulation. WIth a null-modem link, two rival players can fight each other head-to-head.



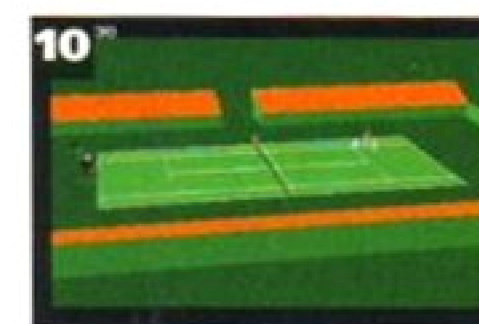
7 Stunt Car Racer
MICROPROSE
Stock car-style destruction meets ski-jump circuits in this alarmingly realistic hook-up. Using a null-modem link, two players can race each other on the same track.



8 Flight of the Intruder
MIRRORSOFT
From the makers of *Falcon*, this Vietnam-based simulation offers two-player head-to-head dogfighting when connected via a null-modem link.



9 MiG 29 Super Fulcrum
DOMARK
A complex but exhilarating flight simulation featuring a null-modem link which enables two players to go dogfighting head-to-head.



10 Tennis Cup 2
UBISOFT
Relive the excitement of the Wimbledon Mixed Doubles with this sports-style hook-up. You have to supply the four-player joystick adaptor and the strawberries and cream.



11 Populous 2
ELECTRONIC ARTS
The sequel to the game below: *Populous 2* contains many of the same features, better done. Also comes with a modem or null-modem link, for two player action.



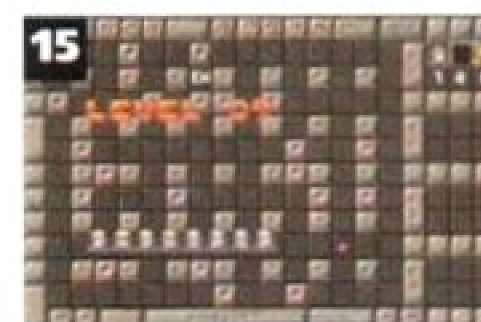
12 Populous
ELECTRONIC ARTS
The Bullfrog's original god-game comes with a modem or null-modem option which enables rival deities to wreak havoc on enemy subjects and save their own souls.



13 Powermonger
ELECTRONIC ARTS
The Bullfrogs move from gods to guns in this multi-player war-game. It uses the same modem or null-modem link to enable two players to go to battle against each other.



14 Global Effect
MILLENNIUM/EA
A strange type of hook-up, where *Sim City* meets global warming over a null-modem link. Two players battle for global supremacy whilst attempting to save the planet.



15 Bug Bomber
DMI DESIGN
Another four-player hook-up modelled closely on UBISoft's *Dynablaster*. It also uses a four-player joystick adaptor to enable mass-destruction in a party-style atmosphere.



16 Stormball
MILLENNIUM
This *Tron*-style game of whirling balls and hovering skateboards uses a null-modem link for two player head-to-head action. It is fast and furious, but that's about it.



The things people do to get linked to their Lawn-mowing simulators! Fortunately, you don't have to go to these lengths to get hooked-up to your Amiga. Usually a short, five-quid cable (and a friend) is all you need.

screen-full of game which is his view of an imaginary game world. Other players enter that game world using their own machines, and their respective alter-egos slug it out. With a hook-up game, your opponents could be just the other side of the desk or a hundred miles away on the other end of a phone – it doesn't matter. The thing which really matters is that you're 'interacting' with real people. Then no-one can say you're being antisocial.

Anyone who's ever played a hook-up game will tell you that there's a world of difference between them and the normal type of games we play on computer. The tension is greater, because the person controlling your enemies is less predictable than a computer-controlled enemy. The outcome of a battle or a competition really matters, because we all want to prove that we're better than another person – computers are, well, they're just computers. The whole hook-up phenomenon is centred around being able to compete in events that generally we could only dream of entering. How many times have you wished you could beat your best pal on a race track? How often have you done it for real? With a hook-up game, you can do it in your living room, and even have a beer or two before you get behind the wheel. Surely an experience shared by a group of people, one which they could never hope to share in real life, is far more valuable than just going down the pub?

"How many times have you wished you could beat your best pal on a race track?"

The games of the future?

It's still early days for hook-up games. We've seen a fair few over the last few years, but we're still a long way from being able to fend off the "computers-are-evil" cynics. If we're ever going to shift the negative image that computer games have, we need more team-related games, where huge groups of people can get together and play with (as well as against) each other. Computer games have already replaced pop music as the top teen-culture (though the record labels try in vain to deny it), and the kids are going ape-crazy over the new breed of consoles, all of which hook-up to each other and offer multi-player fun. And we all know your average Amiga makes a console look about as radical as a digital watch, so why aren't there more adult-orientated hook-ups for the Amiga? There's a whole world of Amiga-owners out there with the best technology available for the job – and yet the first thing software houses drop when they realise they're late on their deadlines is – you guessed it – the multi-player hook-up option. You only have to look as far as *Formula One Grand Prix* or *Lotus: The Ultimate Challenge* to realise we're being short-changed.

The future, as rosey as it looks for computer games at the moment, is dependent on demand, but the softies seem not to be listening too attentively to our cries for more.

But sooner or later, they'll realise that the way to make computer games really become the mass-market products they all want them to be, is by turning them into social events with mass appeal.

Can you imagine a whole pub full of people all playing a multi-player version of *Zool* at once? Or a Saturday afternoon spent participating in the *European Football Championships* – on a network of Amigas? It's not that far away, and plenty of people are realising that they already own enough equipment to make it happen now. Why not join in the fun? You don't need tons and tons of expensive new gear – generally a cable and a decent hook-up game is all you need. So call up a few friends, get some beer and peanuts in, and start the revolution.

WHAT KINDS OF HOOK-UP CAN I PLAY?

Null-modem games

The most common style of hook-up game, these require only a null-modem cable and enough copies of your chosen game to run on each machine. A null-modem cable is similar to the lead you use to connect to a normal telephone modem, except that a couple of wires are swapped around internally. These cables are usually fairly cheap, and you shouldn't need to spend more than a fiver on a reasonably lengthy one.

Usually null-modem games are designed for two players, each using a separate Amiga, although *Lotus 2* enables four players (two per machine) to race at once using a split-screen. Often you can link different makes of computer together to play the same game (Amiga to PC, Amiga to Mac and Amiga to ST), so you're not necessarily limited to playing against just fellow Amiga-owners.

Your competitors are generally in the same room; they actually can be as far away as the length of your null-modem cable. Often, the best set-up is to have two monitors positioned back-to-back so that competing players can't see their opponent's screen.

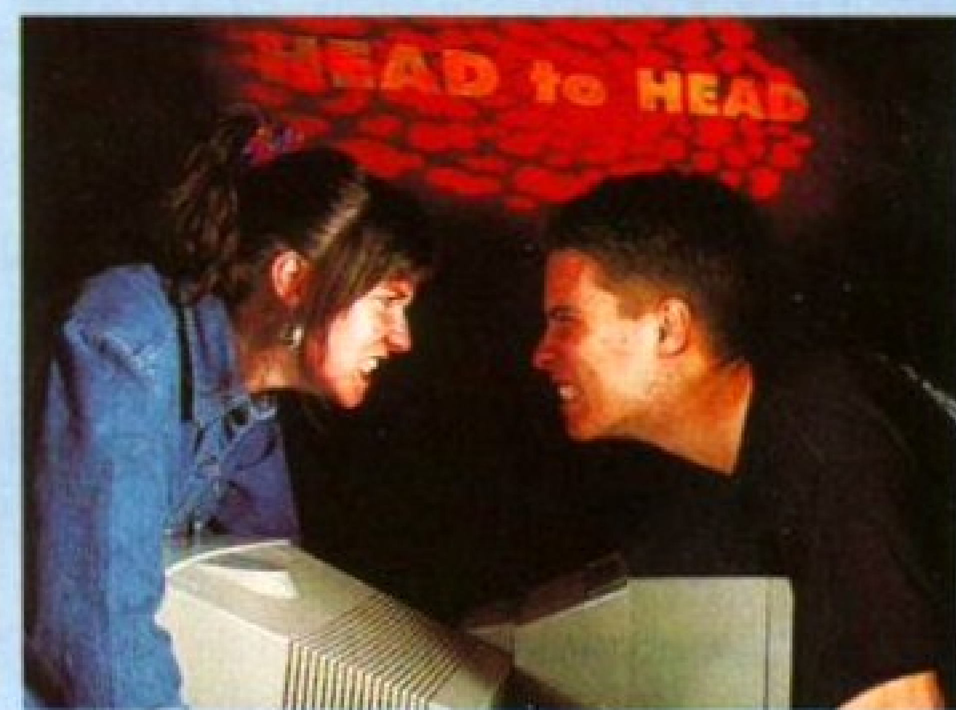
Modem games

Modem games always require a telephone (and consequently a telephone bill) and a modem (which turns the game's linking data into tones that can be sent over the phone lines). There are basically two different styles of modem game and one is more expensive than the other.

Some null-modem games (like *Populous, RoboSport* and *Falcon*) double as modem games too, enabling you to phone up your mate in Edinburgh and play against him over the phone lines. He also needs a copy of the same software (though not necessarily on the same type of computer), and one of you has the responsibility of the phone bill. You see your opponents actions on-screen in exactly the same way as you would if he was on the other side of the table linked by a null-modem cable.

The other kind of modem game is the commercial type, run by a professional business or a good bulletin board. In this case, you dial up the main game-controlling computer and use special game software to link you into to it. In many cases you need a subscription to the bulletin board or host computer, or you won't be allowed to play – this kind of information is generally found the first time you log on. The best professional multi-player modem game in the UK is Air Warrior (part of the OnLine Entertainment computer system which now comprises four different kinds of multi-player game – see the Games News pages for more information), but there are a few others run by bulletin board operators around the UK, Europe and the USA.

With modem games, competitors can be located anywhere in the world, as long as they have access to the phone line. You never see your opponents in real-life, only in the virtual world of the computer game, but often you are able to chat with them by typing on your keyboard, and your messages are passed using special communication channels built-in to the game.



You don't *have* to end up squabbling over who's paying the phone bill. Some hook-ups are cheap to play.

Four-player adaptor games

These are the cheapest type of hook-up, and strictly speaking they're not really a hook-up at all, because they take place on a single computer. They require an Amiga and a special four-player adaptor to play.

Two players plug into the game using the Amiga's normal joystick and mouse sockets, while the remaining two players plug in to the parallel port via the adaptor.

The game itself has to be able to recognise the four-player adaptor, but it does mean you only need one copy of the game.



The new hook-up from Maxis takes competitive sport into a new arena – the computer paintball game. Is RoboSport really the adult version of the shoot- em-up, and will we all get completely hooked?



As many as four different teams (controlled by humans or your Amiga) can wage war against each other in a variety of settings.

RoboSport

Departing from their normal style of simulation games, Maxis move into the territory of multi-player war-gaming, with surprisingly effective results. *RoboSport* is a detailed and involved game for up to four players, based on the familiar paintball games that real people play with paint-filled airguns. The difference is that *RoboSport* is an all-weather affair that you don't have to leave your seat to play. The contest is one of brain-power rather than brute force, and the blood'n'guts has been replaced by bolts and bytes.

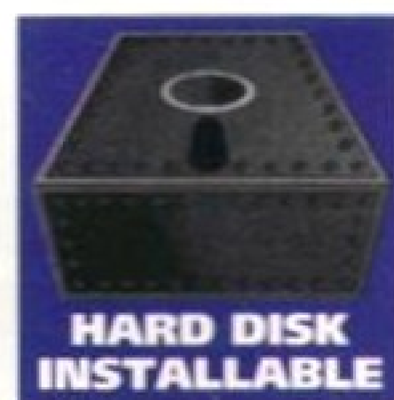
Playing with time

In a nutshell, *RoboSport* takes slices of time (usually around 15 seconds long) and lets each player decide what to do with their robots during each time-slice. The players plot the routes of their robots: planning sneak attacks, laying covering fire, searching for enemy robots, and so on. Each player can check and re-check the actions of their team so that when the 'actual' 15 seconds is replayed, everything goes according to plan. *RoboSport* has a terrific time-manager display which makes all of this this really simple.

When everyone has decided what they're doing during the time-slice, the Amiga combines all the plans and calculates their outcomes. This is displayed as a series of movies which can be replayed just like a video. Each movie is 'filmed' from a different player's point-of-view, so that nobody knows where their enemies are – until they pop into visual range. On a single Amiga, this involves a lot of turning your head away (and-no-peeking), but when you have two or more Amigas hooked-up together each player gets their own planning and movie-viewing screens, safe from the gaze of their rivals.

Stop-start action

The movies form the foundation for your next round of attacks. Another 15-second time-slice to fiddle about with – another plan to tweak and hone – until you're ready to switch to 'real' time and see what happened. Each round you work on what you remember from the movie – where was the last enemy position, what direction was he going in, did he plant a bomb perhaps? Tension builds surprisingly quickly, especially when you're hooked-up.





There are plenty of different strategies to play, thanks to the varied scenarios and game-styles provided. You can play games like 'capture the flag', 'rescue a hostage', 'last man alive' and even a deadly version of baseball. There are three different map styles depicting suburbs (for inner-city clashes), rubble (for that Sarajevo feel) and the guts of a computer. Maps come in eight sizes, so anything from a skirmish to an all-out war can be played.

" The contest is one of brain-power rather than brute force "

The human factor

RoboSport is much more exciting than anything Maxis have done before. The graphics come in high-res and low-res forms (but you need 2Mb for high-res) and although they're not spectacular, they are better than Maxis usual style. Sound, too, is improved, thanks to the use of samples which add to the atmosphere of destruction, and don't immediately have you reaching for the volume knob.

There are a few niggles, but usually these are a result of waiting for other human players to finish, or ensuring they're not sneaking a look at your display when you share a computer. That's not really *RoboSport*'s fault though. Things are much better in a hook-up situation (*RoboSport* can play over a modem, a null-modem link, or via Commodore's Workbench 2 Ethernet add-on), but if you wish, you can always play against computer-controlled teams, each with their own style of battle-management.

RoboSport is probably going to attract adults rather more than kids, because the game involves planning and patience, but that's not a criticism. The great thing about *RoboSport* is its versatility; there are plenty of different ways to play, making it ideal for a group of people. A small skirmish may take an hour or so to complete, but huge campaigns can be saved and continued at will. The key to extracting your money's worth is making it a party-game; playing against people makes everything so much more fun. *RoboSport* is the shoot-em-up with infinite social-lives, so go out and buy some.

Neil Jackson



RoboSport's endgame sequence isn't worthy of much acclaim, but it's the joy of beating real people that matters most.

RoboSport
Ocean/Maxis ■ £29.99

- Perfect hook-up game for up to four players.
- Graphically not amazing, but it's smoother and quicker than other Maxis games.
- Plenty of variation in gameplay and scenarios, with room for future expansion.
- Good use of samples, but it could have been improved with more.
- Needs two megabytes to get the best out of it, but still playable in the low-res version.



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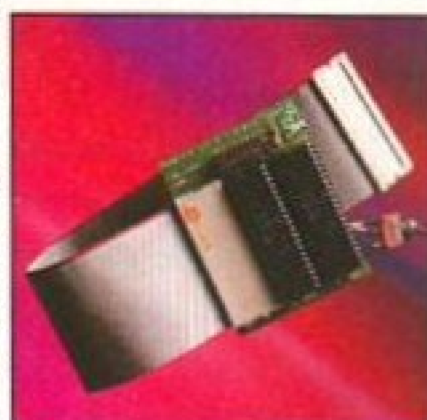
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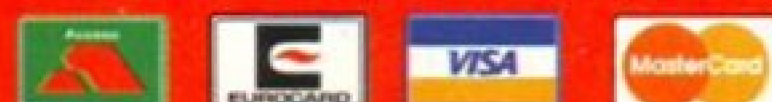
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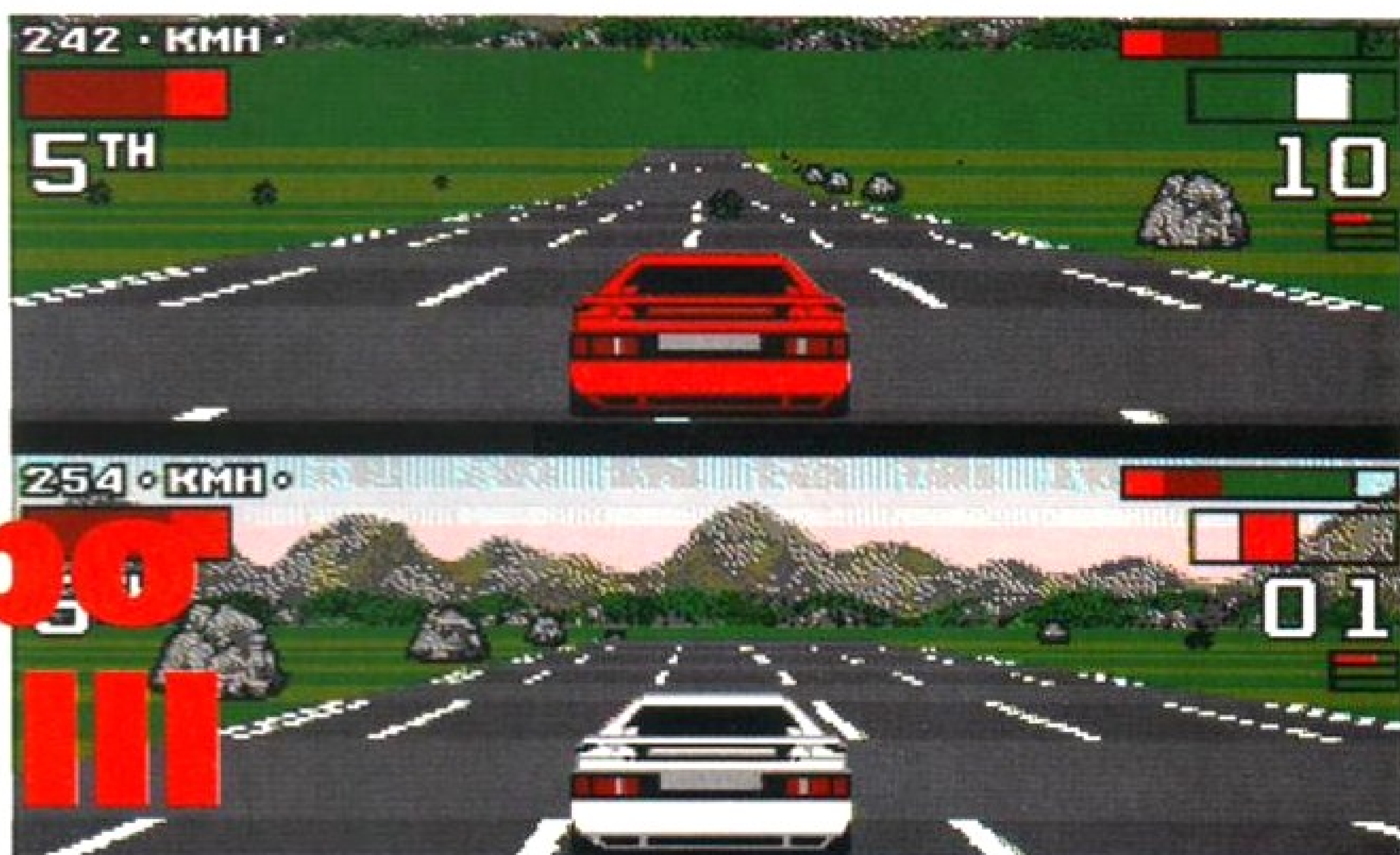
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'The Ultimate Challenge'? Or is it 'Just another driving game'? Crash-test dummy **Andy Nuttall** takes a spin in Gremlin's new supercar...

Lotus Turbo Challenge III



The Windy course of *Lotus Turbo III*, one of the new additions to the track list from *Lotus II*. In one-player mode it's superb, but in two-player mode (as shown here) it is disappointingly slow.

Unless you're new to the Amiga, or you've been asleep for the last couple of years, you will surely have heard of the *Lotus Turbo Challenge* games from Gremlin. The original Lotus was a fast-moving, adrenaline-pumping race game with a two-player option that made it second to none. When *Lotus II* appeared everyone adored it because it was even faster and offered a range of track styles.

Now Gremlin have come up with the third and final game of the series, appropriately titled *Lotus III: The Ultimate Challenge*. *Lotus II* was a huge improvement over the original, so what has *Lotus III* to offer the Amiga racer?

Overdrive

To start with, there's the addition of a new car. In *Lotus I* you drove an Esprit, while in *II* you could choose between an Esprit and an Elan, depending on the track. In *Lotus III*, though, you can not only pick one of those but also a new Lotus – the M200. Although the cars have similar specifications, they each have different characteristics which make driving them just that bit different.

Then there's the addition of five new scenarios to choose from, to make a total of 13. Each of these offers not only different scenery, but a totally different 'feel'. On the Snow level for instance, the car will slip and skid, making it difficult to control; while on the Fog level you will only be able to see the area just in front of your car (except for the tail lights of the cars in front, of course).

" If you own Lotus II I'd think twice about buying this version "

The main addition, though, is the Road Environment Construction System (RECS). It's very true to its name in that it can only alter the road environment, and not create specific tracks, so people who were hoping for a Scalextric-type course designer may be a little disappointed.

Top gear

RECS enables you to alter all aspects of the race ahead – bends, hills, obstacles, weather – you name it, RECS can do it. You can also set the difficulty level for a course, between 1 and 99. This not only makes the course itself more difficult, but also increases the intelligence and aggressiveness of the other drivers in the race. Set it to 99 only if you were a Kamikaze pilot in a previous life.

When you design a course, it is assigned a string of letters, each of which corresponds to a particular parameter in the track design. The idea behind this is that you can design a track, then go around to your mate's house and use the given code to play the same track there. It works, too. If you've got a relatively short name, or a favourite football team, you can type this in and have your own personal track, which sometimes works really well, and adds a bit of fun to the proceedings.

RECS also enables you to define and store up to nine separate tracks in a list, so that you can play them all in a sort of championship challenge. This is an essential addition to the list of features, because playing each track you've created separately would soon become tiresome.

Due to space limitations, though, the inclusion of this feature has meant that the *Lotus II* option of linking two Amigas together has been left out. The general consensus of opinion around the ***Amiga Format*** office seems to be that the linker was a vital part of *Lotus II*'s popularity, and the fact that it's not in the new version means that unfortunately it loses a lot of brownie points.

WHAT CAR?



Lotus Esprit Turbo SE
The original, and some would say the best. It's certainly the fastest, anyway, but it doesn't accelerate quite as quickly as the Elan. It performs best on tracks which have hardly any hills and obstacles on them, and in slippery conditions such as mud and snow.



Lotus Elan SE
This car has loads of acceleration, so you can almost feel the G-Force as you zoom down those steep hills. In the game, it's definitely at its best on tracks which have lots of bends, loads of obstacles, and lots of grip on the road. Sadly, in real life, the Elan is no more – it's ceased production.



Lotus M200
The newie – a big, bright green beast of a car, which is the latest in the range of Lotus cars. Probably superb to drive in real life but in this game it's not as exciting as the other two. More of an all-rounder, really – one which is good in icy or muddy conditions, and equally good on roads.

ROAD ENVIRONMENT CONSTRUCTION SYSTEM

The new addition to the range of options in Lotus is RECS, which enables you to alter tracks as you wish. Here's what it's all about…

Defines the number of bends in your track.

Gives you a choice between a racing circuit, trying to beat other players, and a rally-type track split into stages where you race against the clock.

RECS gives each variable a letter, forming a code.

Alters the sharpness of the bends in the course.

Adjusts the amount of scenery on the track.



Sets the length of track. You must refuel on longer tracks.

Alters the scatter of the scenery and obstacles.

Changes the gradient of the hills defined above.

The most exciting part of RECS, which enables you to choose between the 13 tracks available in *Lotus III*. The track currently selected is Night.

Defines the amount of obstacles in your way.

So aside from the course designer,how does it actually play? Well, in one-player mode, the game has a fairly similar feel to *Lotus II* – the same 'wind in your hair' feeling as you whiz around each circuit. There is a choice of music or sound effects as you play, but the available tunes aren't that great so you're better off sticking to the sound effects.

Ask any *Lotus I* or *II* player what made the games the classics they are today, and most will, like the ***Amiga Format*** team, say the 'two-player mode'. This may not be the case with *Lotus III* though.

Food and drink

The graphics are quite jerky, which can be off-putting if you're used to the earlier games. The speed still seems to be there, but the frame rate (the rate at which the screen updates) is vastly reduced, giving the impression that you're going much slower than you actually are.

This may be due to the addition of new objects, the intelligence of the drivers or the calculations necessary for RECS, but either way the thrill and the feeling of speed is lost. It's still very playable, but it could (and should) have been so much better.

The new-found intelligence of your opponents makes a difference to the gameplay, but they still manage to drive through all the obstacles unaffected while you screech to a halt if you so much as clip a rock or a bollard in the road. This always struck me as unfair in the first two games, but you learn to live with it I suppose.

Chris Kelly

In many ways, *Lotus III* is a game which borrows the parts from its two predecessors and compacts them into one game. For example, in *Lotus I* it was necessary to refuel quite often on your way around the course, while in the sequel there was no fuel, and the concentration was all on the game itself. *Lotus II*, of course, had several tracks to race upon, a fact which made the game a lot better in many people's eyes, so it was included in *Lotus III*. This idea of using the best features breaks down a little, however, when you consider that the link-up feature has been left out, and the two–player option is slow in comparison with the previous two games.

OK, the bottom line. If you own *Lotus II*, I would definitely think twice before parting with your dosh. 25 quid's a lot of money, especially when all you're really getting is a course designer and some extra tracks. They are just too similar to warrant buying both.

In its own right, though, *Lotus III* is a pretty good game with loads of options. For a single player who hasn't got a racing game, then I'd recommend it without question, if only because of RECS. For someone who is looking to race with their mates, though, I would have to rate *Lotus II* more highly, simply because it's faster and as the feature on multiplayer games (Page 66) says, you can't beat being hooked-up.

Andy Nuttall

Lotus Turbo Challenge 3
Gremlin ■ £25.99

- **A great game, with plenty of options and great playability, but loses a lot in two-player mode.**
- **Excellent presentation, with a dramatic intro sequence.**
- **Very similar to *Lotus II* with the addition of RECS, a new car and five extra tracks, but the lack of four–player mode isn't good.**
- **Think carefully before you buy it.**

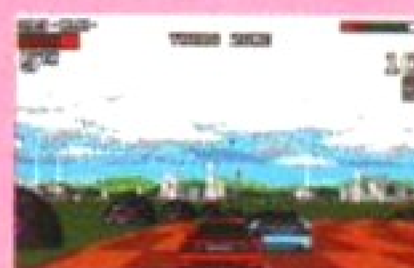


76%

THOSE TRACK TYPES IN ALL THEIR



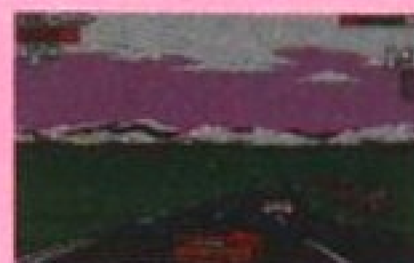
MARSH
Great to play, but very difficult. Oil and water on the track make the going tough, so most of the time you end up skidding off the road.



FUTURE
Quite exhilarating, but doesn't look as good as the others. Lasers are your main obstacle, and a 'turbo zone' is supplied with every track .



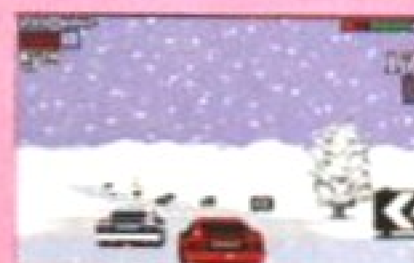
NIGHT
Headlights on main beam as you zoom around a pitch-black track, with a Manhattan Skyline (cue a song) in the background. The best track.



LAKES
Jump across rivers and dodge oil slicks on this course, which is especially good when it's twisty and hilly – feels just like you're in the Lake District!



MOUNTAINS
A rock wall to the right and a vast open space to the left as you race around a narrow mountain course. Very precarious, and very difficult.



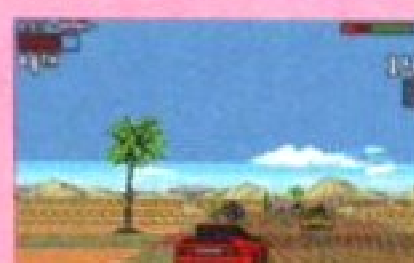
SNOW
Lots of obstacles on this one, including snow drifts and ice patches. Steering is very light, so the car slips and slides to good effect. Great snow effect.



ROADWORKS
The M25 simulator. Great feeling of speed as your car whizzes past the bollards and roadsigns. Great fun, especially if you have loads of hills.



STORM
Excellent rain effect, with flashing lightning and good thunder samples. Huge puddles in the road are common, they'll slow you to a standstill.



DESERT
Again not an easy surface to race on, with a similar feel to the Snow course. Stick to the middle of the road, as sand tends to collect at the edges.



FOG
Similar feel to the Night track, in that you can only see a few feet in front of the car. Can get frantic from time to time, especially with lots of bends.



CITY
Set on a wide motorway, you can cross over to the other lane to get around the sharper bends, but you must watch out for on-coming traffic!



WINDY
Racing around the plain of America, your main adversary is tumbleweed which blows in abundance from left to right across the track,

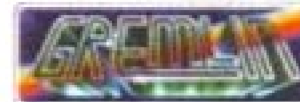


COUNTRY
Windy roads, logs, rocks and fords in the road - this is exactly like a real country lane, except you never get stuck behind a tractor.


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2) What does CDTV stand for?
3) Whose LP was called *The Wild, The Willing and the E St Shuffle*?
4) Who sang "weird dreams inside the goldmine"?
5) Who played the Wicked Witch of the East and in what film?

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Game 2: Putty
No longer called *Silly Putty* apparently, but still a hell of a fine game. See the full review on page 82.



Game 3: Formula 1
Drive like a Mansell in this superb... er driving game.



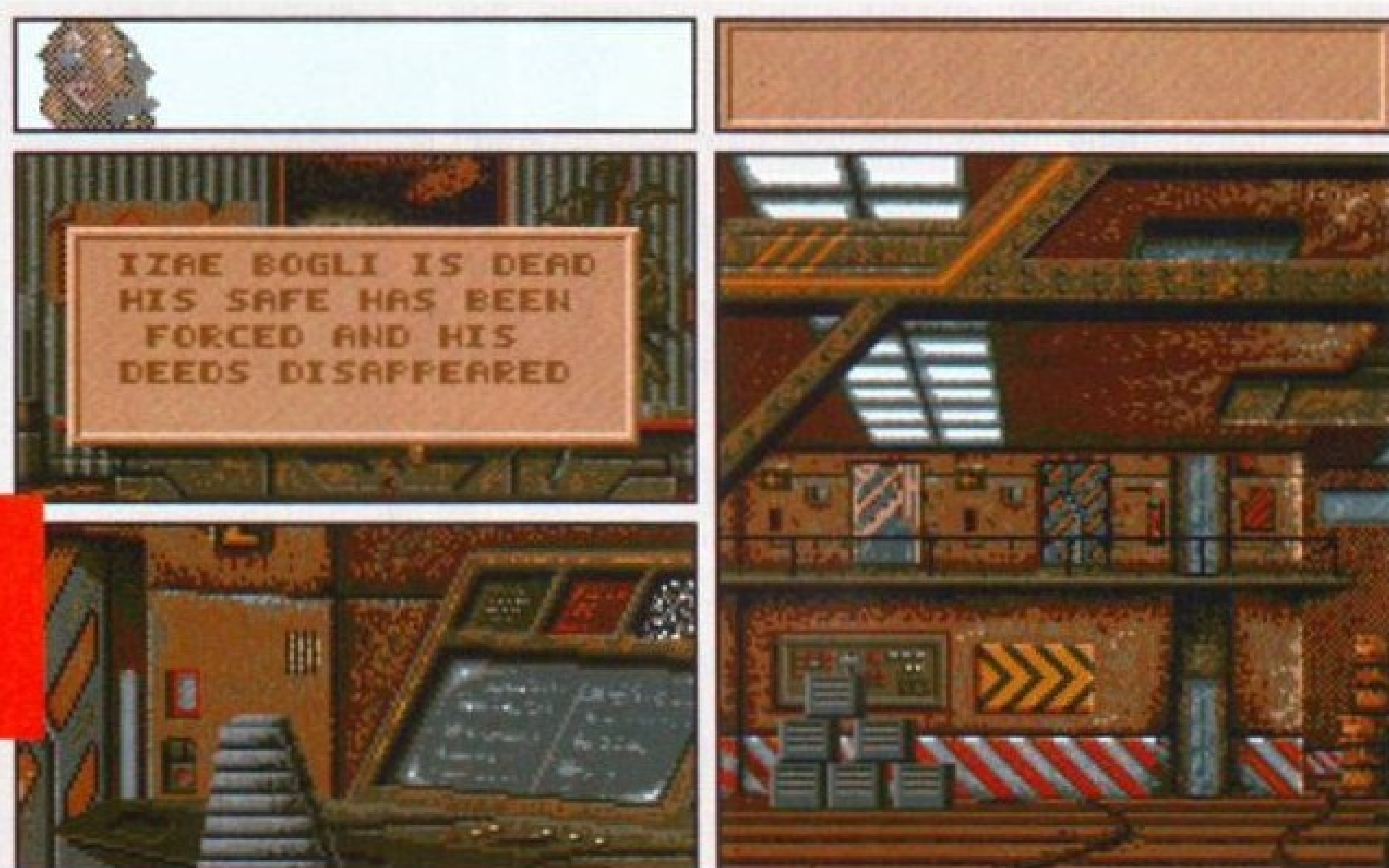
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2) The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition.
3) If you are smug when you win the prize, we will award it to someone called Barry or Delvin or SkybeamMoonChild.
4) Jim works in the postroom.

Get ready to join the Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters, don your silly hat and trench-coat, and act just like a real detective. Strange worlds beckon in UBI Soft's latest adventure

BAT II



No doubt there'll soon be someone trying to do the same to me as they did to Izae. The best thing to do in this situation is probably to get out quick and avoid dark alleyways.



Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? is the novel by Phillip K Dick, that was the inspiration for the ultimate Cyberpunk movie, *Blade Runner*. Now the indie programming team Computer's Dream have produced – they hope – the ultimate Cyberpunk adventure, *BAT II*. You're taken to the late 21st century where the people are a mish mash of Romans, Shedish (a highly evolved race from the planet Simian) and the Illean (not so bright race of aliens). The architects of this world take ideas from the Roman era and mix them with technology to produce something they call a 'High Tech Paradox'.

You play the part of a BAT agent (it's an acronym, like UNCLE, and stands for Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters) on the search for evidence to prove how corrpt the Koshans are. It is rumoured they are forcibly taking control of all the known Echiatone mines in the galaxy. Echitone is a valuable spice, essential to the smooth running of the modern world, smacks a bit of *Dune* methinks. You roam the six sectors of Roma 2, the capital of the planet Shedishan, moving from screen to screen. It's like reading a comic; many of the screens are visible at once, their size relative to the importance of that location. As you look around the location the mouse pointer changes from an arrow to a credit card or a speech icon, depending on what you're pointing at.

Batmen

Although a cross between a graphic and text adventure *BAT II* encompasses other elements. There are four flight and one driving simulators, which can be set on manual or automatic. You can't damage yourself in the simulations

THE BIODIRECTIONAL ORGANIC BIOPUTER

Every BAT agent has a BOB, and BOB II is even better than the the original. In real time BOB will analyse your agent, monitor all his bodily functions and control his heartbeat.

Clicking on the first icon brings up this screen. It displays your characteristics as a mark out of 100 and shows you how far you've progressed in terms of experience – and how much of the game you've completed.

FORCE : 032
INTELLIGENCE : 044
VITALITY : 032
PERCEPTION : 100
REFLEX : 031
CHARISMA : 116
EXPERIENCE : 027
PROGRESSION : 01
EXIT

Accessing this screen lets you measure the agent's heartbeat, gives you a body map with damaged areas coloured and enables you access to a diagnostic sub to program.

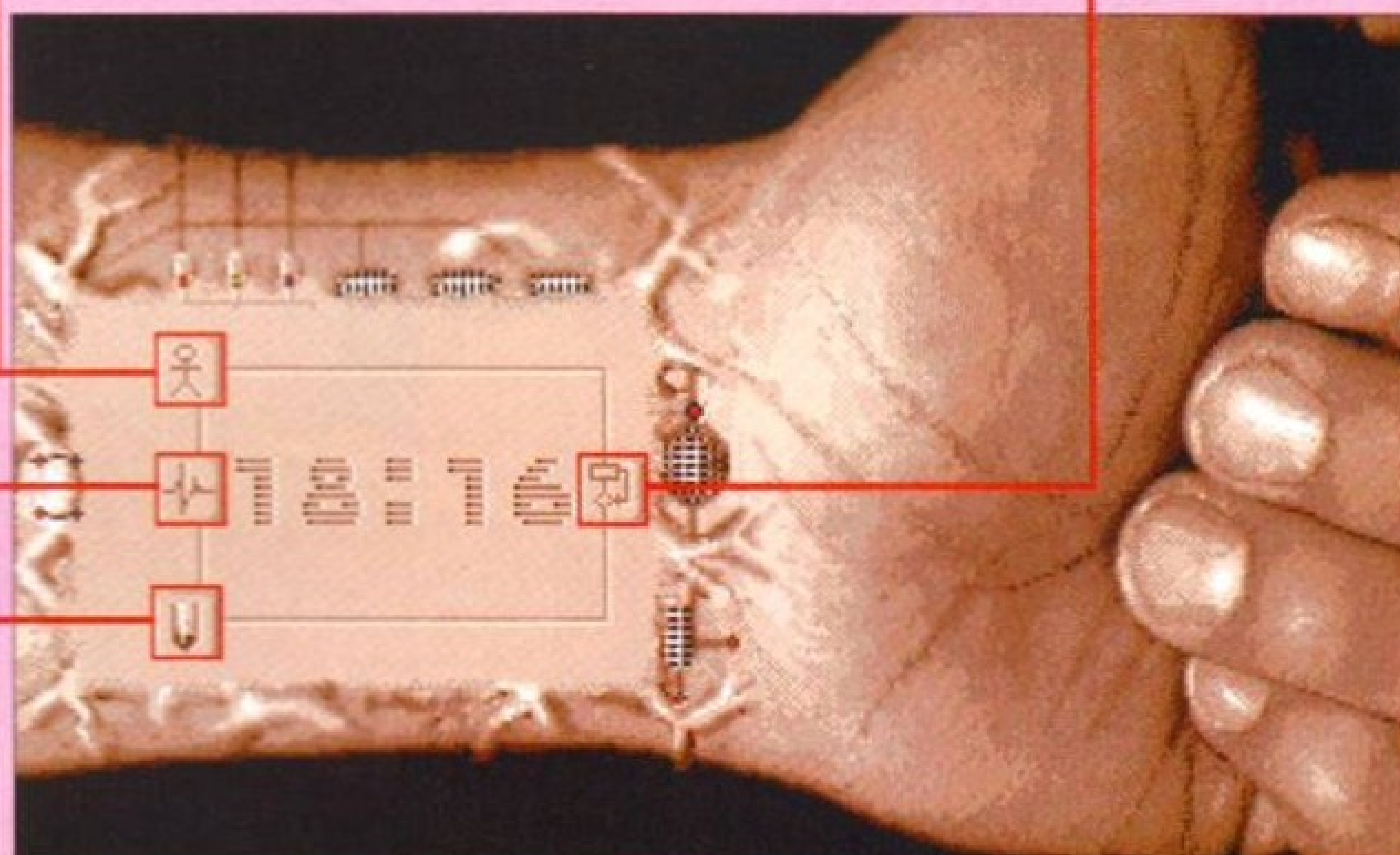


Each BAT agent, when recruited has a series of cybernetic implants surgically placed in his body. These are switched on by clicking on the function that you wish to operate. These are active for a short while so use your time well.

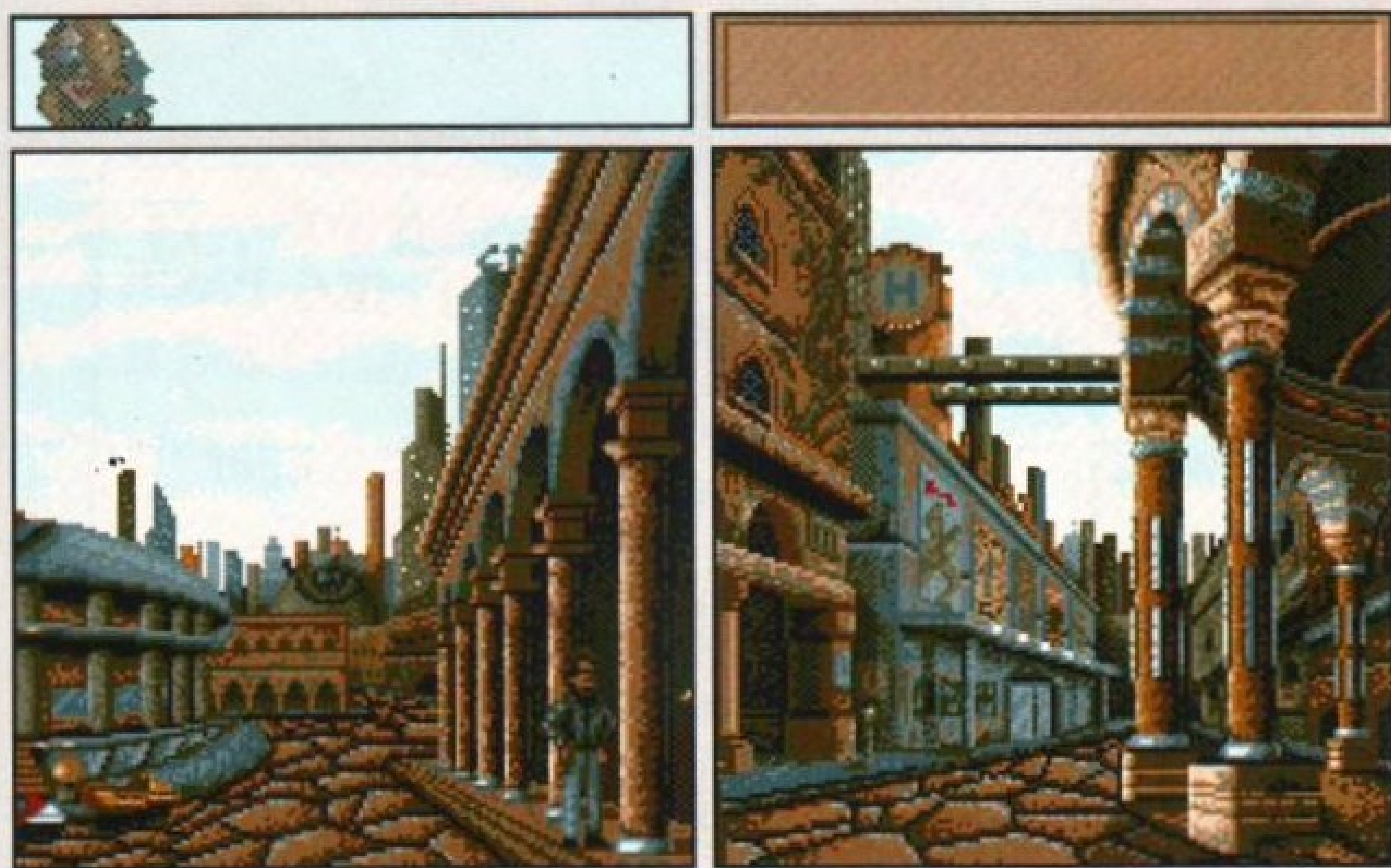
ATS 34 (S1)
FIBRINE (S2)
HYPERCEP (S3)
MORPHO L7 (S4)
PSY (S5)
EXIT

The Programming Module is basically a simple flow chart designing program. The language you program in is called 'Parallel Token', you only use pictures to design procedures and you can have up to five programs running at once. Exiting the program editor automatically sets off the compiler to convert your program to binary code.





This is the BOB interface set into the BAT agent's wrist. You can get by without using the bioputer but you've got a much better chance if you master the programming techniques.



Most of the city looks like this. High-tech paradox, a mix of Roman architecture and technology influenced by the mix of races that inhabit the planet.



Taking manual control of the Via is cheaper than hiring a driver. But you run the risk of being caught speeding, and getting fined.



Design your own agent, every characteristic can be decided on, even down to his looks

and travelling manually is cheaper, but takes longer. A lot of work has been put into getting longer fields of vision in the 3D simulations, which gives the movement a more realistic feel to it. The simulations aren't just there for fun; they're the only way to travel further down the street you're on.

Your inventory is set up like a set of Russian dolls: a bag inside a bag inside a bag. So you have to make sure you put things sensibly in your rucksack otherwise valuable time is spent trying to sort out the contents of your handbag when you should be collecting clues.

It's not all fun, fun, fun

There's an arcade section that not only gives your brain cells a rest but it's a good way to keep the cashflow flowing. There are three arcade games in total comprising a *Breakout* clone where you control not one bat but four, a Chinese chequers game and a weird thing in which you control mercury flowing through various pipes and taps.

At the beginning of the game you are given the option of which BAT agent you wish control. Jehan Menasis is the agent you 'get free', but you can design your own with specific qualities, like 85 per cent charisma. A smarmy, handsome young man can creep his way around even the hardest-souled women.

Gimme five

BAT II comes on five disks and is not hard disk installable, though it does make use of extra disk drives. Whileloading doesn't take long it still ruins the atmosphere somewhat, and in a game like this the atmosphere is a big part of the enjoyment.



The flowers around the speech bubble mean this girl is hot to trot. If she wasn't friendly then there would be lightning.

Along the way you recruit allies. Before sending them on a mission make sure you give them a videopager so they are always in contact with you. You also meet a host of enemies. When in combat you choose between a text-controlled strategy fight or an arcade bash up where you get to unleash your pent-up angers on some rather dodgy-looking aliens.

BAT II is not copy protected, the coders have used the much maligned dongle protection system. Herve Lange of Computer's Dream explains: "We find that dongles are adequate protection against piracy, and it is the programmers fault if it is easily foiled." We will have to wait and see if his theory is right.

" This is the sort of game you get lost in... immerse yourself in tomorrow's world "

There are over 400 animated sequences, the colours of the city change as night falls to a dingy blue grey; overall *BAT II* looks very, very nice. There's enough detail to hold your attention even if you're not getting very far, if say you're a novice to adventuring. This is the sort of game you get lost in, it's so huge it's difficult to know where you've been and where to go to next. But if you enjoy immersing yourself in tomorrow's world, playing a modern-day Sherlock Holmes then *BAT II* will keep you from the horrors of the real world long enough to maybe forget for a while.

Clare Hodgson



One of the first places you come across is the Astroport. You can take the Via to anywhere within the city from here or just hang around and chat to a few tourists.

BAT II
UBISoft ■ £34.99

- Bigger than huge.
- Some really smart graphics, animation and sound. WOW.
- A bit too involved for the novice, you have to live and breathe *BAT II*.
- A cyberpunk's dream. But the gameplay is slow at times.
- Not hard disk installable. With five disks to swap between this can be infuriating

Verdict **84%**

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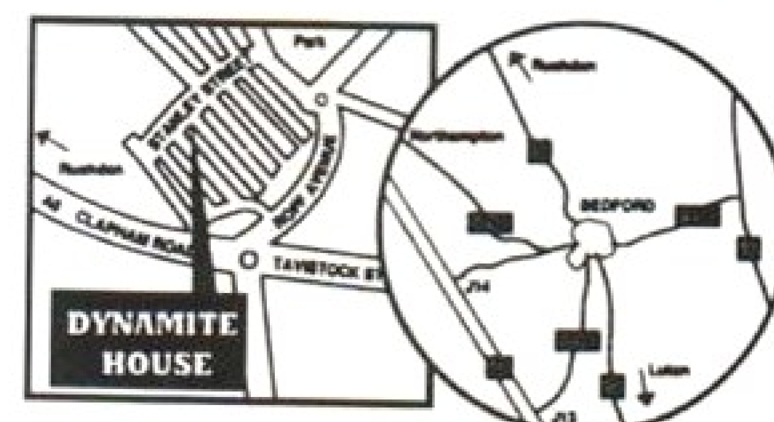


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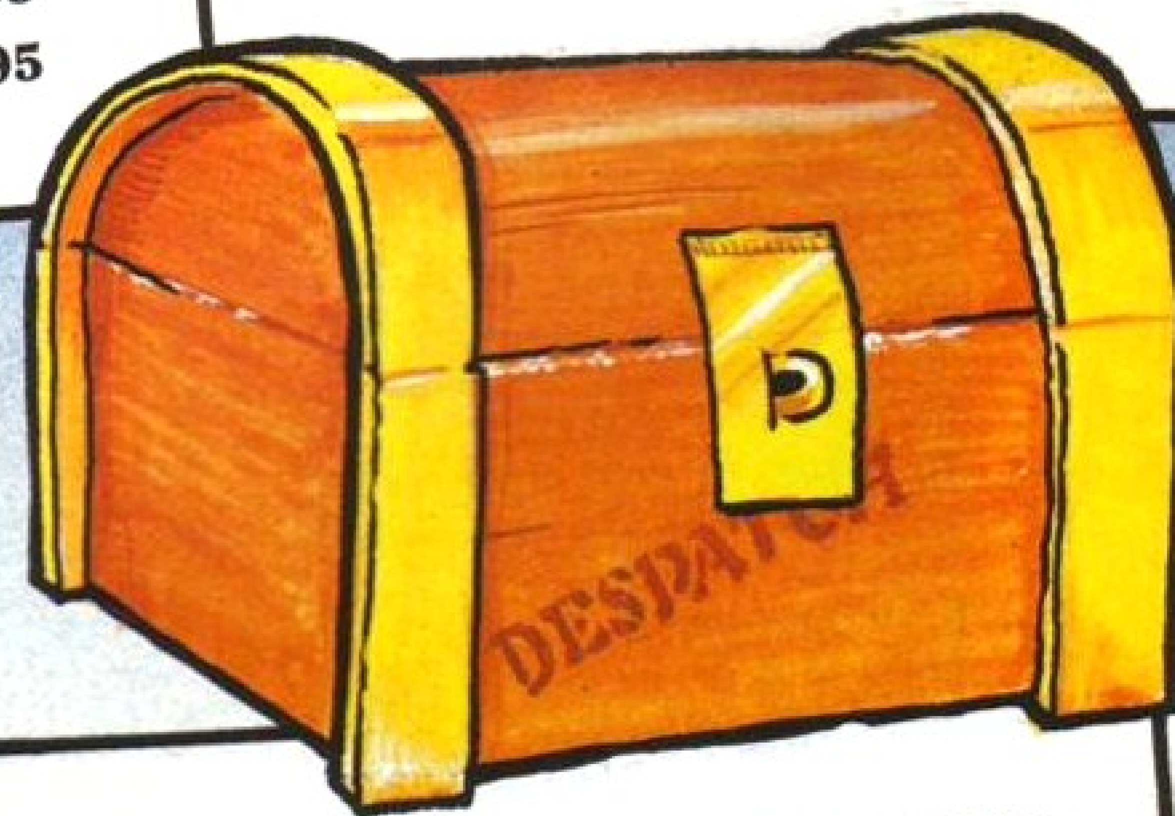
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System 3 have had plenty of stick about their recent games, but their new release redresses the balance. Batten down the hatches and seal up your window panes 'cos it's time for…

Putty



The nasty evil Dweezil (an orange cat which is the equally evil Dazzledaze the Wizard's sidekick) sticks his head through the backdrop to poke fun at you for not saving one of those crying babies.


NEEDS 1 MEG

As he slept in his homely hole on Putty Moon, Putty began to dream about his old Grandpa…

"Ee, you must remember as well as I do, young Putty. The Moon used to be a quiet place, and our people lived in peace and harmony. Until, that is, the evil Wizard Dazzledaze and his cohort Dweezil the cat decided to pick on us. Sold us off for chewin' gum, they did. Daylight robbery. And what did you do? You just sat there, didn't you, whinging about how you had a cold.

"Well now it's time for action, young Putty, ACTION! There is only one way to rid the Moon of its evil presence, and that's to help the Bots to build a tower from the planet Zid to the Moon. When it's completed, the Bots will be able to climb up it to vanquish Dazzledaze and Dweezil once and for all. Only trouble is, the Wiz has captured the Bots as well and frozen them in ice. Only you can rescue them.

"The future of the Moon is in your hands, young Putty, or whatever you have for hands, at least. Don't let us down."

With the vision of Grandpa gradually fading away, Putty awoke. After he got up and stretched a bit, he decided that today was the day when he should change from being a lazy, cowardly blob and do something about the wicked Wizard…

"From psychotic carrots which yell "Uzi 9-centimetre!" to Shockapillars… they are deadly"

You take control of Putty as he (Is it a He? How can you tell with an amorphous blob of blue matter?) attempts to free the Bots from their captivity, and return them to their spaceship. Not only are the levels of Putty Moon difficult to negotiate for an amorphous blob such as yourself, but also Dazzledaze and Dweezil have sent a whole army of nasties to thwart your efforts.

It must be really difficult nowadays to think up a new scenario for a platform game, but System 3 have not only come up with a good story, but a superb game as well. Not since *Robocod* have we seen graphics of this quality. It's got incredibly colourful and detailed backgrounds, superb scrolling and great characters.

The main character, Putty himself, is a small but perfectly formed sprite which is very nicely animated. As he moves along, little feet are formed in his flexible form, and his eyes point in the direction he walks. The eyes aren't fixed to his body, they sort of 'float' on the top so when he falls they follow his body a split second later.

He can be made to stretch into all manner of shapes, look around corners, absorb the enemies and take on their shape - he's basically the most versatile hero since Arnie Schwarzenegger (and you don't often see Arnie inflate himself to huge proportions then explode, do you? I rest my case).

PUTTY, IN YOUR HANDS


Large exploding Putty: this is achieved by waggling the joystick up and down, and has a 'smart bomb' effect.


Being amorphous, Putty can easily flatten out so he can absorb things.


Bouncing Putty. Notice how his eyes display direction.


Slithering Putty: little feet are formed a he walks.


Normal Putty: just waiting for something to happen.


Punching putty: letting go a Putty knuckle sandwich.


Morphing Putty: absorb an enemy to take its shape.


Absorb: squelch down to absorb organic items.


Stretchy Putty: elongate the blobby hero to reach high platforms, zoom along the floor, or nip past the enemies when they're not looking. This is Putty at his most flexible. Just look at him go!


Aw, a cute little teddy bear. At least until he stands up and starts attacking you, shouting "Achtung" in a menacing manner. Still, that's part of the appeal of the game.


Look down! Look down! There's some false teeth down there just ripe for the absorbing. And once you have them you can absorb all the big nasties you find on later levels.



Putty slides and stretches his way past a distinctly Egyptian gentleman who continually gobs spit at you. How disgusting.





Yes, here's Dweezil again, but this time he's brought a flying saucer to squash you with.





Lots of cute little Bots all hanging around at the local milk bar, gossiping and generally having a good time. Should you rescue them? Where do they go? You'll have to buy the game and find out...

The nasties usually attack in large formations, and may take on one of a huge range of different forms. From psychotic carrots which yell "Uzi, 9-centimetre!" as they offload a few rounds at you, to Shockapillars (electric caterpillars), they are generally very deadly but at the same time strangely cute…

Have I mentioned sound? Well, this game has the most bizarre sound effects since *Mega-Lo-Mania*: a huge collection of sampled bells, whistles, pops and screams all of which actually add an enormous amount to the game. In fact the sound effects are one of the first things people notice about Putty, and they draw you in immediately.



Uncle Ted arrives just in the nick of time. He is accompanied by his incredible musical instrument, making the nasties dance like crazy fools!

You are rubber

The first level is basically a trainer, which enables you to bounce around to your heart's content, getting used to the control system. This screen even has little arrows pointing around the level which are labelled with actions (eg Bounce), which is good because control is difficult at first. Anyway, after five minutes of play it all becomes second nature.

The first screen only has one Bot on it, along with a few nasties, so saving him is easy. It quickly becomes apparent that the Bots are not only harmless aliens, but also inordinately stupid. How they can build a huge tower from Zid to the Moon when they can't find their way back to the spaceship I don't know.

All seems serene and gentle until… Aaarghh! The second level really drops you in at the deep end, with loads of horrible aliens and three Bots to save. The Psycho Carrot makes his first appearance here, and he is instantly likable even though he's trying to pump you full of lead. Punch him to reveal a crying baby (oh, I nearly forgot - Dazzledaze kidnapped a load of babies and turned them into the nasties), and then absorb the baby for extra points. The Bots actually move around on this level, and if attacked by an alien they will leap to their death, lemming style, so you have to get to them quickly.

Credits are picked up along the way, arcade style, and a continue option is provided so that you can start from the same place with a new set of lives - and you need them, too. If and when you lose all your lives, Dweezil the cat pops up, Looney Tunes style, and yells "Too Bad!" at you, with a bit of cartoony music playing over the top.

I am glue

I really can't say enough about this game. I could sit and write for a few weeks and fill the pages of this magazine about all the beautiful graphics, marvellous sound effects and neat little touches which make it so special, and then go back and play it again and still find something different. It is that expansive. At the same time, though, it's incredibly playable, the sort of game that will keep young and old coming back again and again for months.

With elements of *Dropzone* and *Robocod*, the cuteness of, well, something indescribably cute, and the most bizzare sound effects ever, it's easily the best platform game I've ever played, and certainly in the running for the best game ever on any computer. With the recent release of *Zool* and now this game, the Amiga is yet again confirmed as the games machine to have.

Andy Nuttall

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE (AND LEAST FAVOURITE) THINGS



Uncle Ted diverts foes for 30 secs with his songs.



Pocket watch for 30 secs of extra time.



False teeth: absorb four baddies.



Jump straight to the bottom of a level.



Jump straight to the top of a level.



Dweezil power: Invulnerability bonus 30 secs.







Three not so helpful souls. The Magician's Rabbit, the Clockwork Orange, and a Sausage with with a big mouth.





And a pair of good guy Bots. Great trainers! Shame about the ice-trap.

Putty
System 3 ■ £25.99

- Indescribably good graphics, sound, characters, music and presentation.
- Neat, original touches which make the game more fun, and keep you coming back for more and more.
- Control is difficult at first, but you soon get the hang of it.
- Loads of levels which will keep you going for months to come, and the children quiet over Christmas.



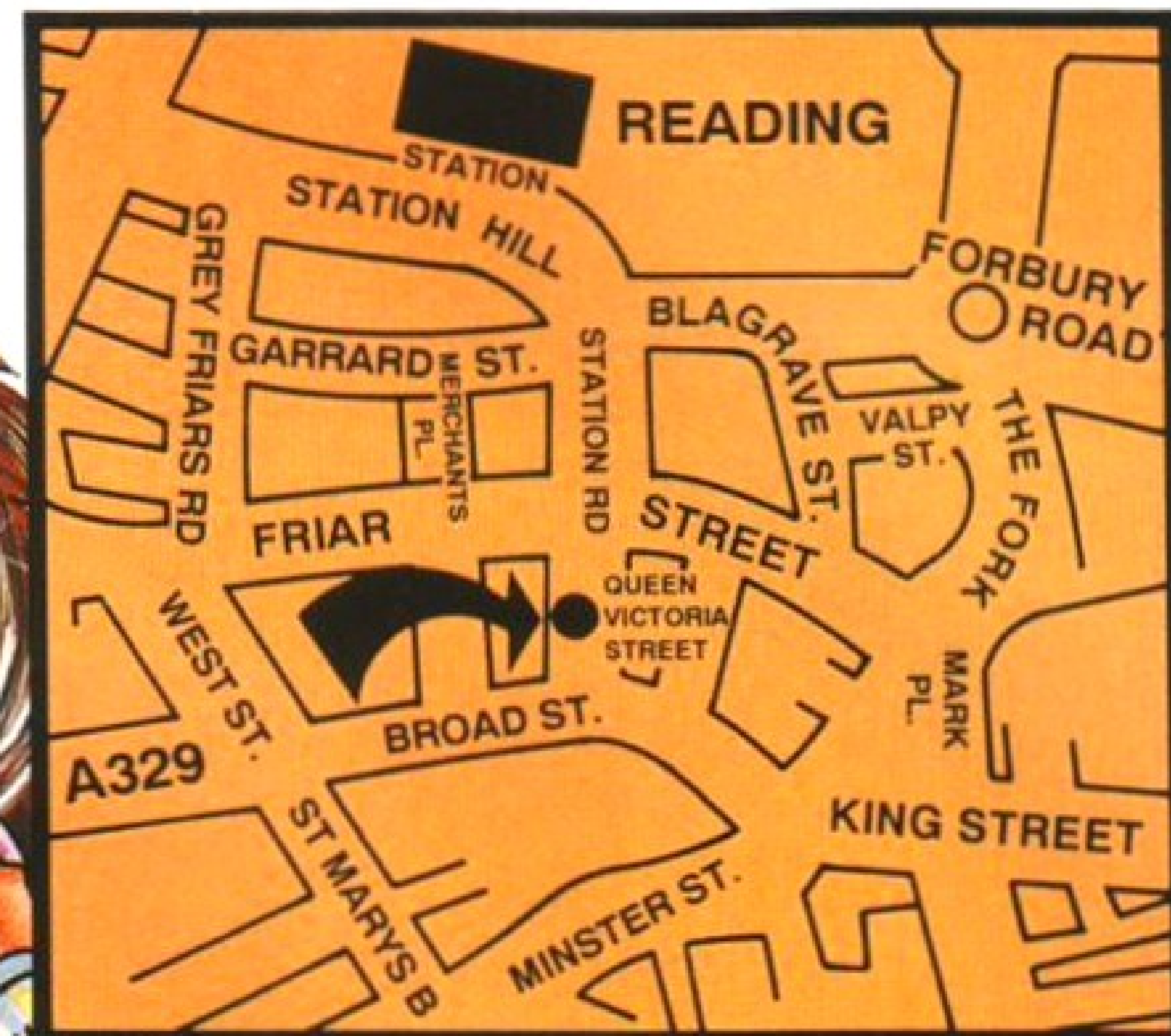
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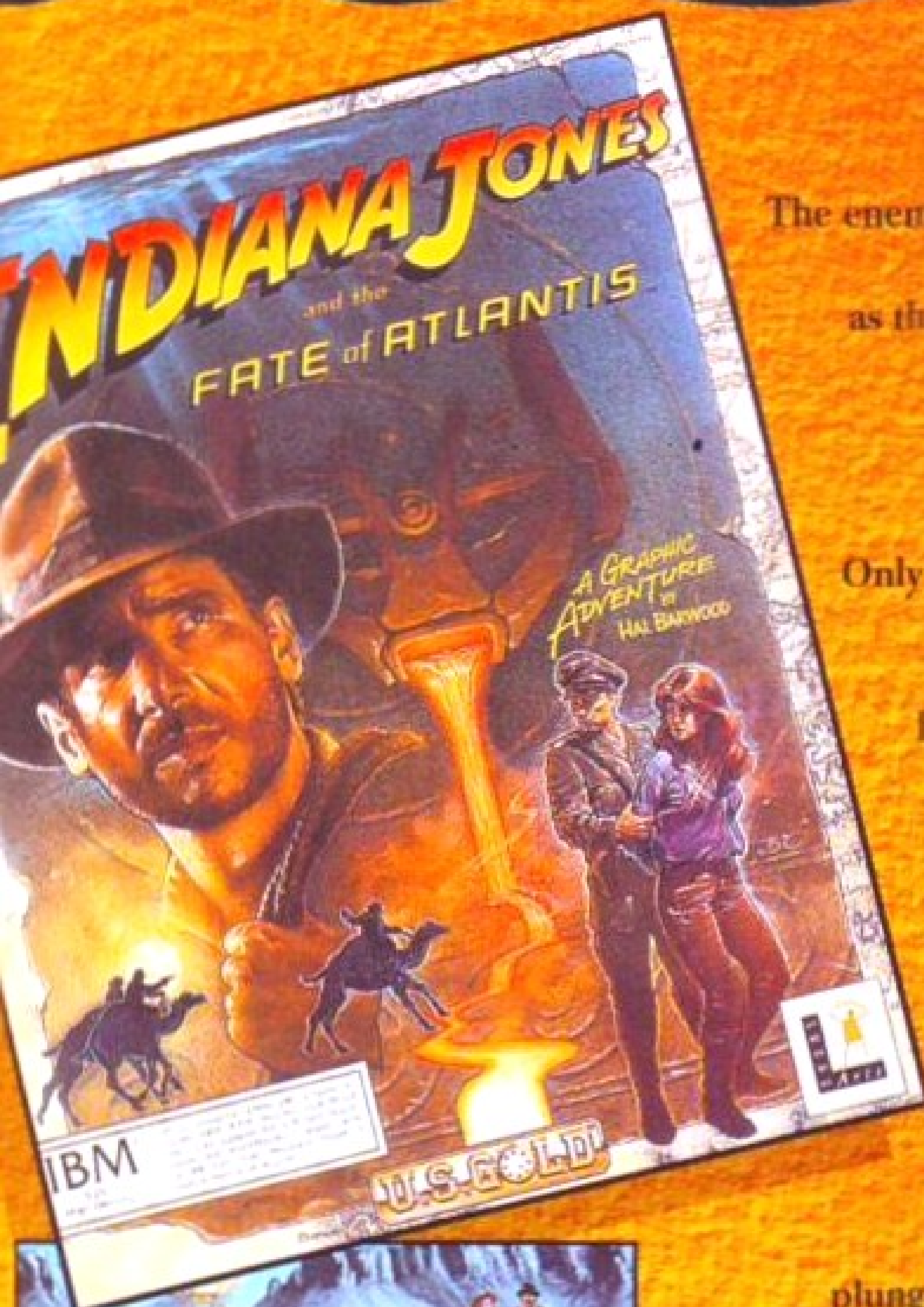
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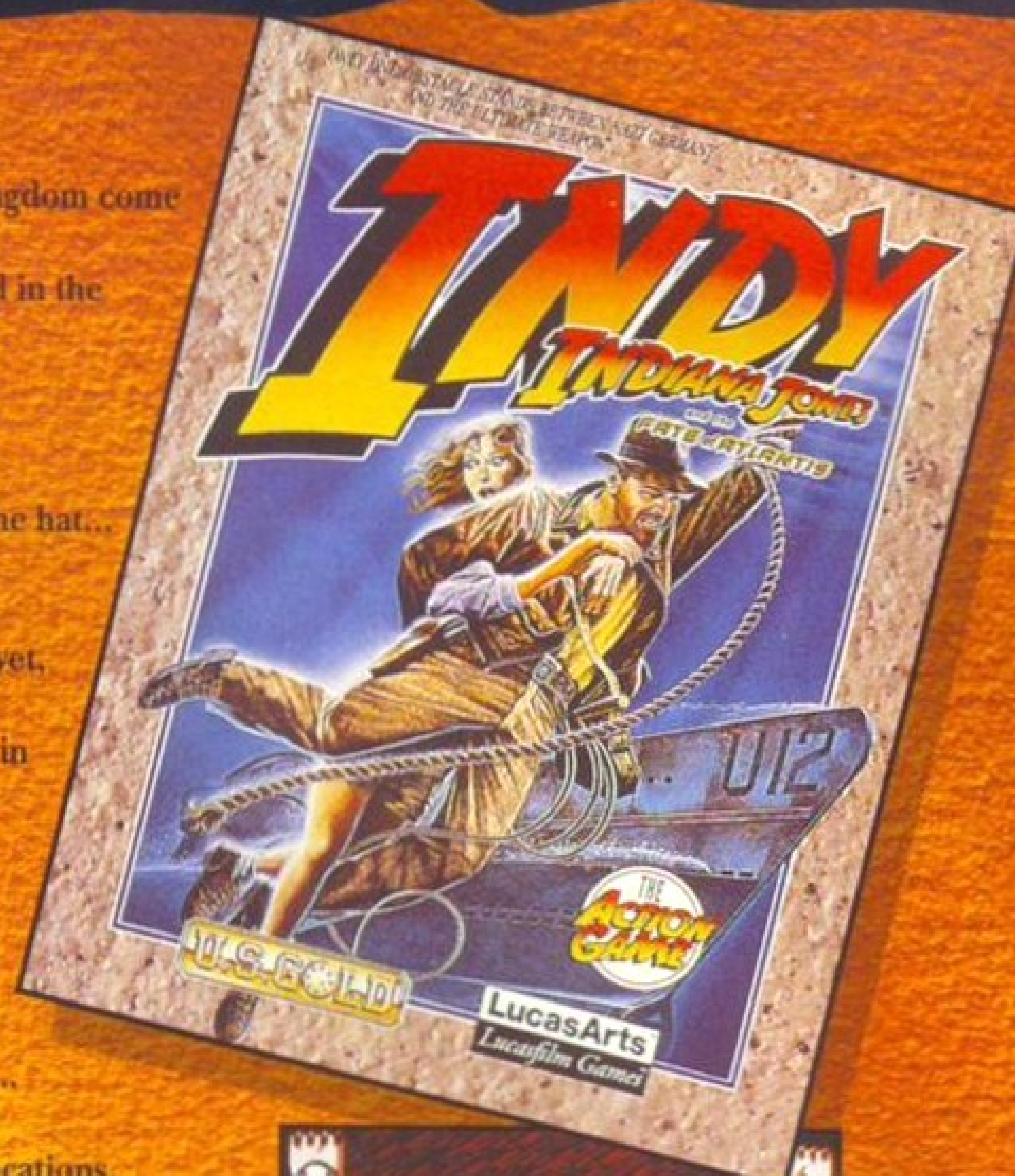
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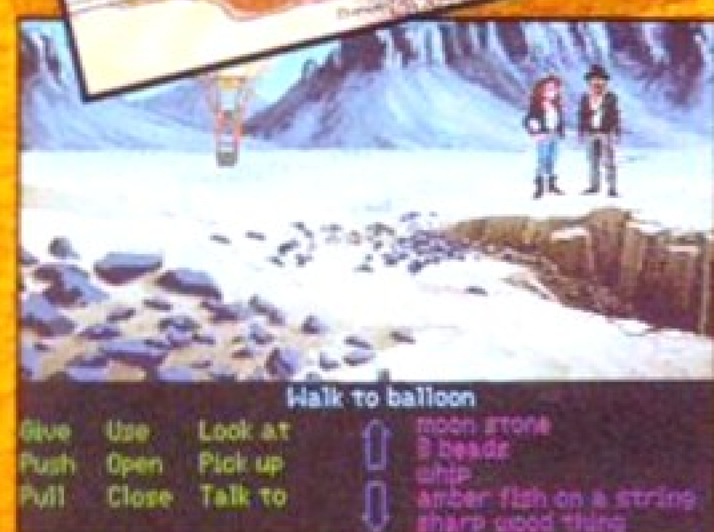
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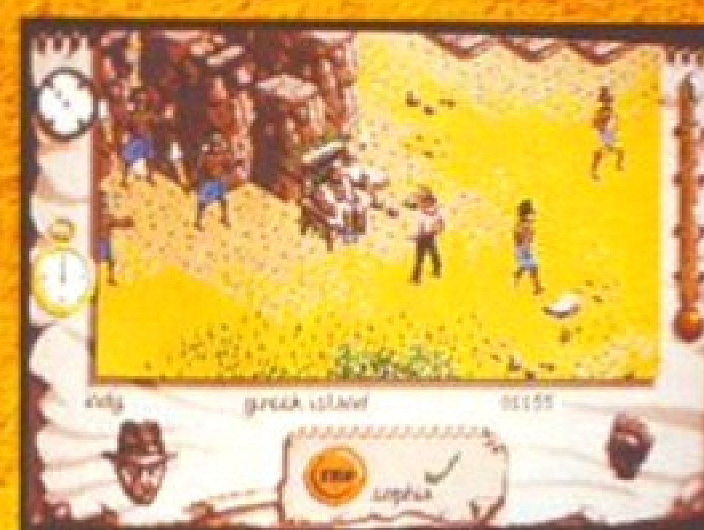




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Hector hangs out near the baths, strictly for practical purposes. It might look a little iffy but all those togas lying about might come in useful.



It's that gag again – one of the consuls of Rome, Seganus Megadrivus, whose job is dictated by his rank. Brings a tear to the eye every time!



Herculaneum back when it was all buildings. McDonald's is at the top left and at the bottom right, Agrippina is about to invent Coca Cola.

Rome AD92

It's the history of Rome we're concerned with here. Well, two or three days of its history, sometime in May '92. You are but a poor slave called Hector, but you desire wealth, fame and fortune, and particularly that natty toga 'n' sandals combination. Through a series of six conveniently bite-sized adventurettes, the idea of the game is to battle your way from the bottom to the very apex of Roman society using any means possible.

Rome AD92 uses the same graphical style and control method as Millennium's earlier adventure, *Robin Hood*. The game world is presented in 3D with the inhabitants wandering about talking, killing, having baths and pretty much doing their own thing. You can wander freely almost anywhere, talk to other people, find objects, have a bit of a rest, or do whatever you like, within the main goal of finishing the quest.

Hector is controlled with the multi-purpose toolbox by the side of the screen. As well as displaying the map, this has options for using objects and talking to other characters. Once you've found out who the character is using the info box, you can chat to them, ask what they're doing or just get straight to the point and steal their money. A 'Do' option covers any other things which may be possible at that point, like apologising profusely for demanding money from a man with a knife.

Romani ite domum

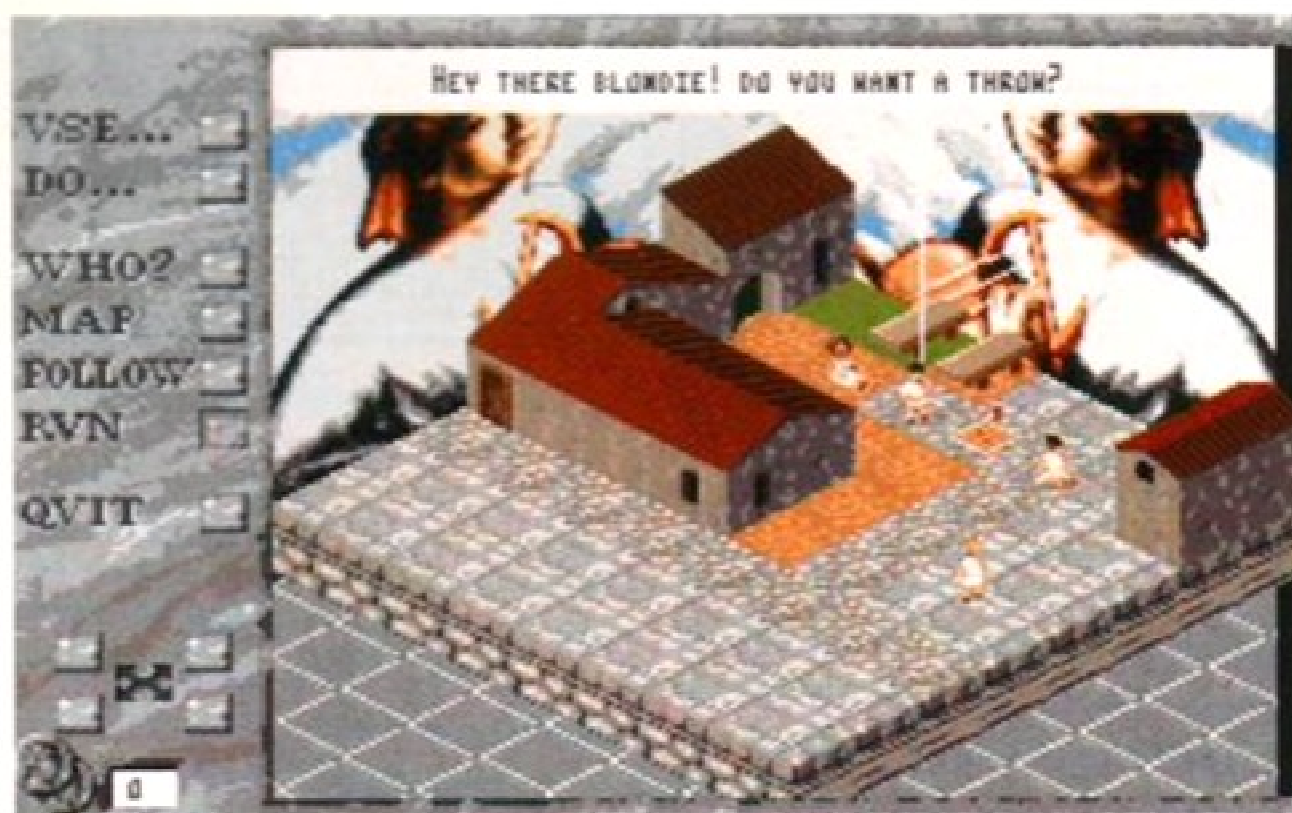
As mentioned, six sub-plots make up the game. Just to add that special touch of 'What am I doing here?', you aren't given specific instructions as to what you're meant to be doing in any of them. So in the first section, set in the quaint fishing village of Herculaneum, you're given the job of delivering a message to the consul in the far west of the town. That's easily enough done with the aid of the map, but then you find yourself wandering about doing nothing in particular. Until Mount Vesuvius erupts and the whole town heads for the boats.

That's when you find out that although you've got enough money to pay the boatman, he won't let you aboard because you're just a slave. Cue floods of lava, a nice piccy of you being cooked and the 'Game Over' message. At least then you know your job is to convince the boatman that you're more than a slave.

The gaul of it

The first scenario is actually quite simple, though even that can be completed incompletely, if you see what I mean. When you leave, you should be carrying enough money to help when you reach Rome; if not, things get harder. The plot thickens even more later on, until eventually it stiffens up altogether and you have to throw it out.

The thing that separates *Rome AD92* from *Robin Hood* the most (apart from 12 months) is that *Rome AD92* is funny. Although the plot is fairly serious there's a thread of sarcasm and irony running through the game, not to mention a sprinkling of slapstick and a long thin cone of self-mockery. The names are straight out of *Up Pompei*: the two consuls of Rome are called Seganus Megadrivus and Nintendus Gameboiis. What a great gag. The lawyer is called Habeus Corpus, and there's a weapon seller called Mafioso. As they wander about, the other characters come up with some precious comments, and at one point you wander into a meeting of the Senate who are discussing putting a flyover on the Appian Way. Alright, it's not rib-tickling but the humour gives the game much more humanity. The section in the manual on the history of Rome is genuinely funny.



I beg your pardon? Oh I see, the dice. Roman taverns were apparently dismal places where disenchanted groups of young men would hold all-day dice-throwing sessions before having a nice long nap.

Thanks to Uncle Remus

The graphics are detailed, much more so than, say, *Populous 2* (which *Rome AD92* resembles now and again). The music and samples aren't outstanding, although they work fine. Unfortunately, the font in the speech bubbles is hard to read and the characters are tiny. Occasionally, positioning Hector is fiddly; he heads for the destination and suddenly veers off on his own, ending up walking round in circles, which is good for a laugh.

Rome AD92 has a lot to offer. It's not too difficult, but then again (almost spookily) it's not too easy either. The graphics are impressive, the gameplay's laced with a deadly humour, but it's definitely a one-play-only game – when it's done, it's done. A lot like the Roman Empire, itself really.

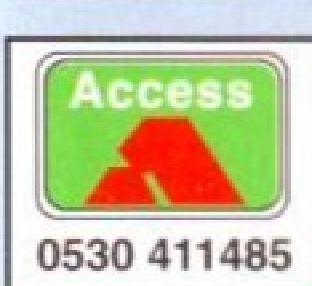
Ed Ricketts

Rome AD92
Millennium ■ £24.99

- Detailed scenery graphics are let down by the small and badly animated characters.
- The six sections make the game easier to play than if it was in one big lump.
- Scrolling and moving around can sometimes be awkward.
- Great sense of humour. Just like *Up Pompei*, only it's funny.
- 'Discover it for yourself' gameplay makes it more interesting.



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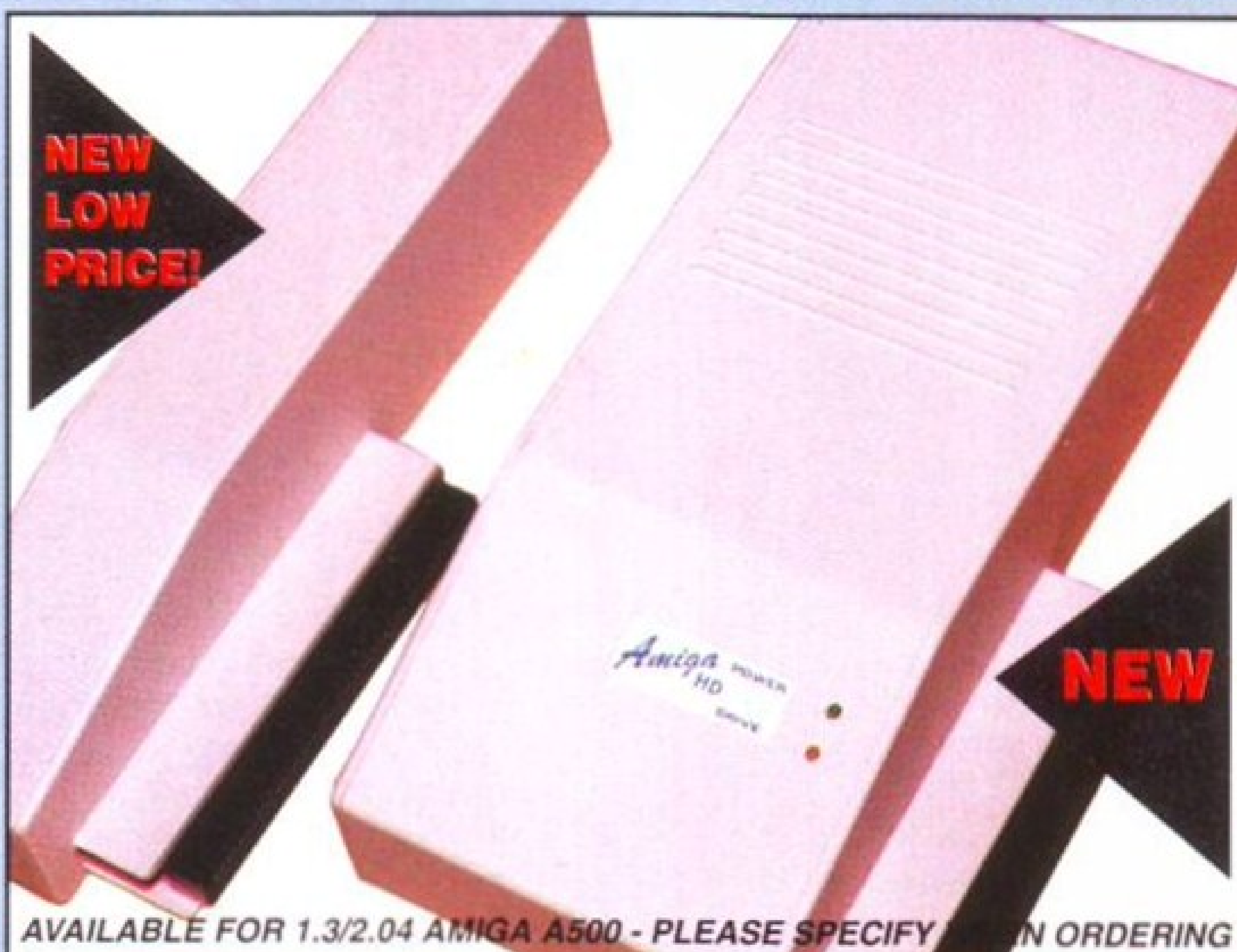
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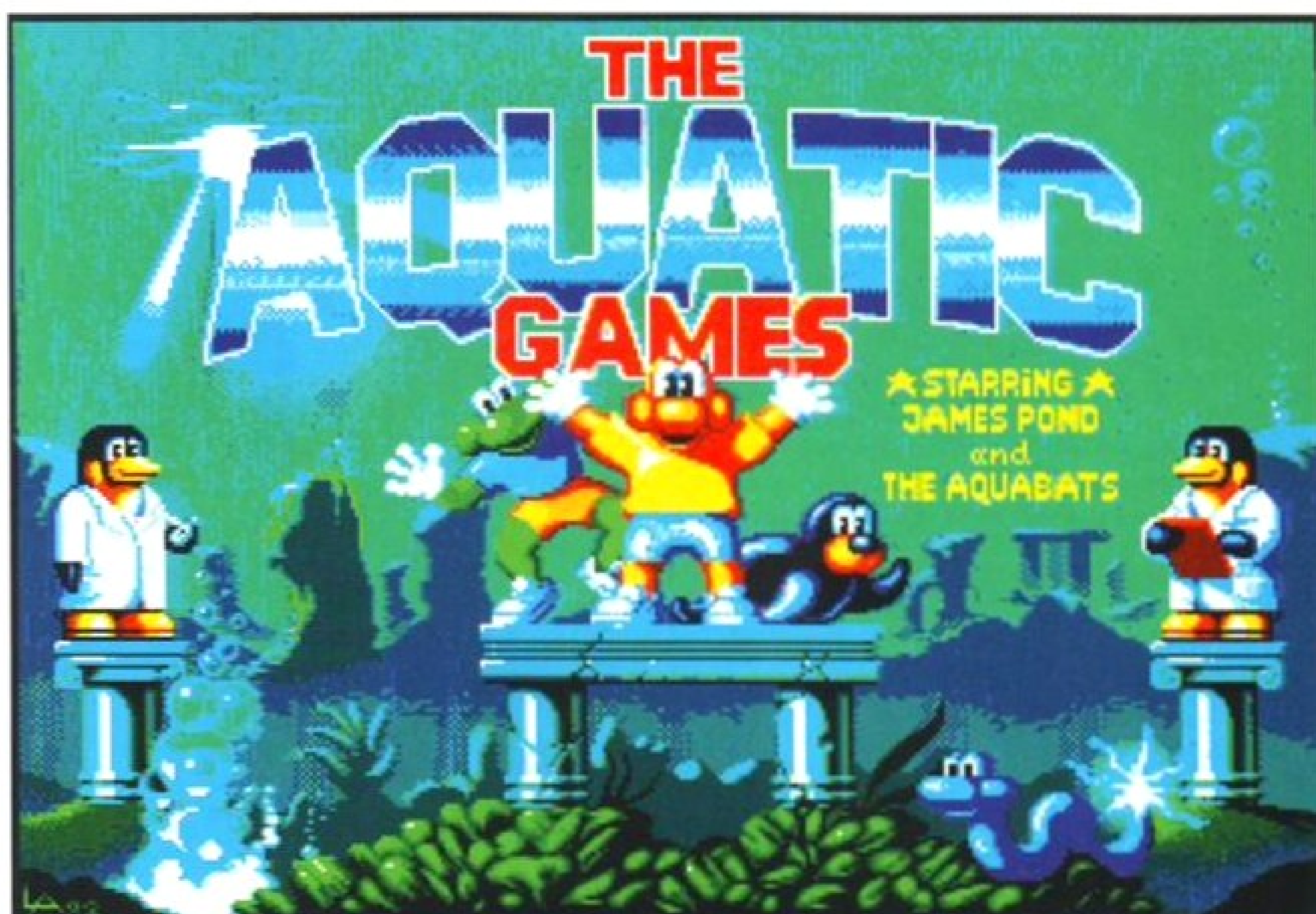

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The secret agent with the golden crispy coating, the stiff upper flip' and no end of other sad puns returns in an eight-event, multi-player, joystick-pummeling sports game.



Meet the Aquabats. Hardly 'the dream team' by any stretch of the imagination, but perfectly suited to the events that lie ahead of them. The question is, are you?

The Aquatic Games

Surely everyone knows who James Pond is? Well, just in case there are a few of you out there yet to be introduced to the F.I.5.H agent, here are the facts: James Pond is (there's no getting away from the fact) a cod; his arch enemy is the infamous Dr Maybe (think about that one) and this is James's third adventure. James is to Millennium what Sonic is to Sega, Mario is to Nintendo or Cliff Richard is to the record-buying public – you just know that you're going to get another dose of the nauseating little superstar at least once a year (normally around Christmas).

But just like Mario, Sonic and Cliff, the product is always of an exceptional high quality, if somewhat lacking in cutting-edge butchness. Although *The Aquatic Games* marks James's third appearance, it would be

AND NOW OVER TO OUR MAN ON THE POOLSIDE... *CUE DAVID!*

...err. Quite remarkable, etc. There are eight events to have a bash at, all have a decidedly 'fishy' feel and here they come:

1. The 100m Splash



This is a standard right-left joystick destroyer that sees James race against F-Fortesque frog across land and water. It will probably be made illegal in the year 2020 once it is realised how many gamesplayer's wrists were knackered in the 1990s.

2. Kipper Watching



This is a lovely game. You play the part of Ceceelia the seal. She must protect her sleeping seal friends from the balls that are carelessly flung around the beach. The longer she can bounce the balls away from her chums, the more she scores.

3. Hop, Skip and Jump



Another joystick pummeling extravaganza complete with the tried and trusted 'hold-fire-until-you-reach-the-optimum-angle-of-45°' sting in its tail. Work that power-meter up to max and then pump on the fire button to make F-fortesque jump.

4. The Bouncy Castle



In multi-event sports games there's always one that is hard to get the hang of, and this is it. James has to bounce from sponge to sponge (easy), to earn points, spin (easy), somersault (hard), double backward somersault (!?) for two minutes.

5. Feeding Time



Freddie Starfish must scuttle up and down the pier feeding his fishy friends with all sorts of tasty goodies in a bid to prevent them being tempted by the bait at the end of the fisherman's lines. Starts slowly, gets fast and furious very quickly.

6. Shell Shooting



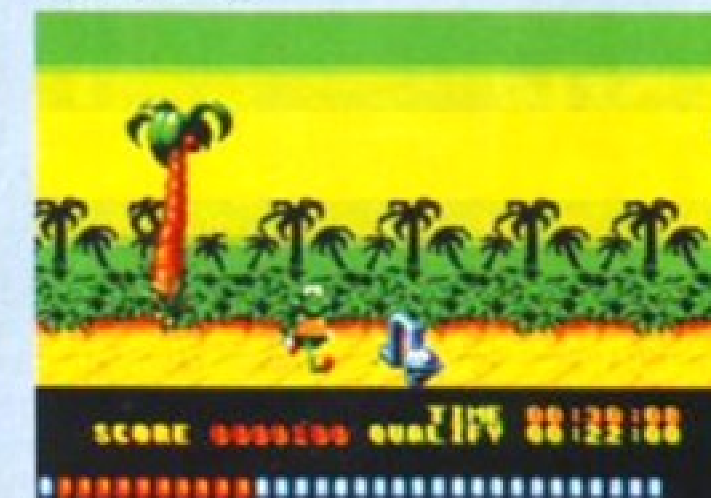
If there are only supposed to be seven original novels ever written, it doesn't bode well for the possible number of original, fish-related sports games. In this game James has to flick limpets, catch them then throw them at the balloons above his head.

7. Tour de Grass



Yes, it's Mark the shark on a unicycle (told you things were getting ridiculous) in another joystick pummeling (this time you must move your joystick round and round, up, up-right, right, down-right etc) race to a finish line. Mark the shark – excellent stuff.

8. Leap Frog



F-Fortesque frog again in an event that resembles the high-hurdles more than any leap-frog I've ever played. Keep the speed up and hit jump to clear the obstacles. If your hands aren't about to fall off after that, you must be Robocop or something.



***The Aquatic Games* may well be a different sort of game to James's previous appearances, but the characters and co-stars are just as animated and as goofy as in the original *James Pond* or *Robocod*. Here we see poor F-Fortesque Frog being told he's a failure. Just look at the poor chap!**

wrong to think of his latest outing as *James Pond 3:The Aquatic Games* is a departure from his usual style of game – both the original *James Pond* game and the truly excellent *James Pond 2: Codename Robocod* were through-and-through platformers. No, *James Pond 3* has yet to be unveiled.

But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves. Let's see what *The Aquatic Games* is all about. Disk in, power-on and let's start swimming...

"Some events require forethought, some need fast reflexes"

Ready for wrist action?

Here's the framework: the Games comprise eight (plus two bonus) separate events. Some require timing and forethought, some require lightning-fast reflexes and some merely require an embarrassingly quick wrist action.

Either one, two, three or four players can play at any one time, although there's no actual head-to-head option (each player takes it in turn to have a bash at each event, the scores and/or times are compared and then it's on to the next).

In a multi-player game, each player gets to control one of four teams, they are The Swamp Bay Splashers (coached by Steve Clam), The Hilly Island Hoppers, Flappy's Flyers and The Deep Sea Dippers. Each team comprises a selection of wacky characters suited to each particular event.

So is this game as good as *Robocod*, James' last game? Well it wouldn't be right to compare them – they're both excellent examples of two completely different genres. The only connection between the two games is Pond himself and the apalling puns that litter the instruction manual and game presentation.

Robocod was a classic, expansive platform-'em-up; *The Aquatic Games* is a completely different kettle of fish (sorry). But each event is well designed, the graphics are truly excellent, the multi-player element is always a welcome insertion (although it's a shame there's no real head-to-head dual-player mode) and there are records to be broken and high-score tables to be nurchered.

So yes, *The Aquatic Games* comes almost as highly recommended as *Robocod* did in *Amiga Format*'s December Issue last year, but for completely different reasons. If you are a sociable type of person who likes to play games with your friends, then you really shouldn't missout on the chance to try test your sk-gills with James and friends.

Neil West



A delighted Pond gets the better of F-Fortesque Frog in the 100m Splash. F-Fortesque is gutted.

The Aquatic Games
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- Eight (plus two bonus) events to get to grips with.
- One, two, three or four players can take part at once.
- Lovely graphics, great animation and slick presentation.
- Groovy (albeit in a fishy style) sound effects.
- Solid game design.



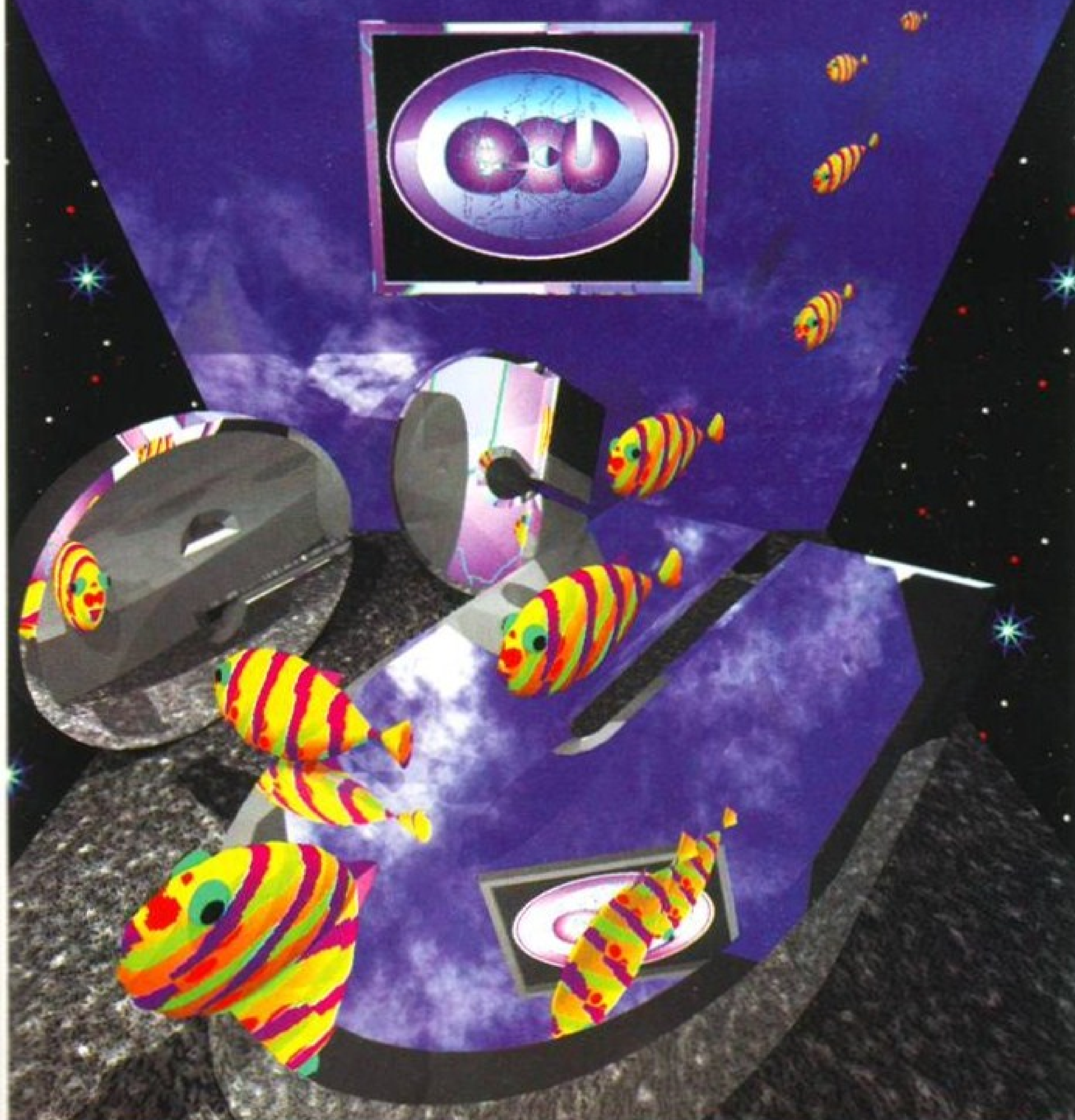
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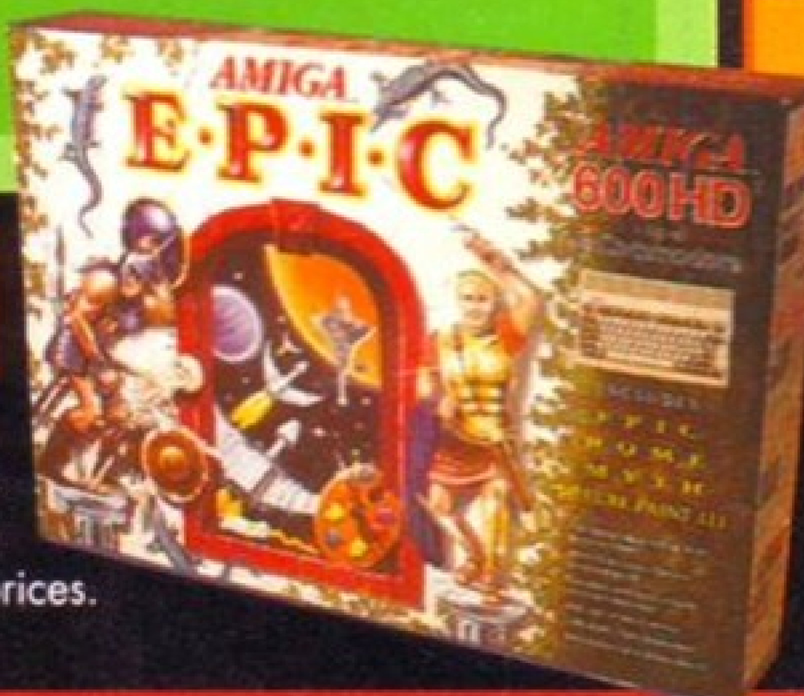
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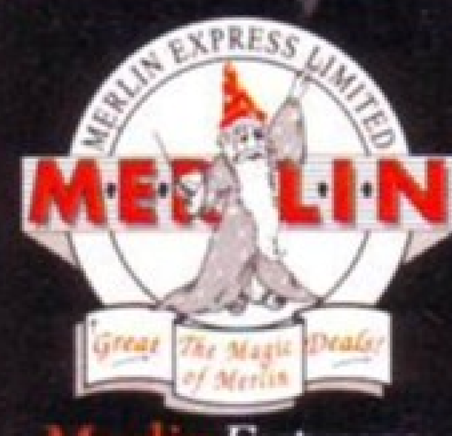
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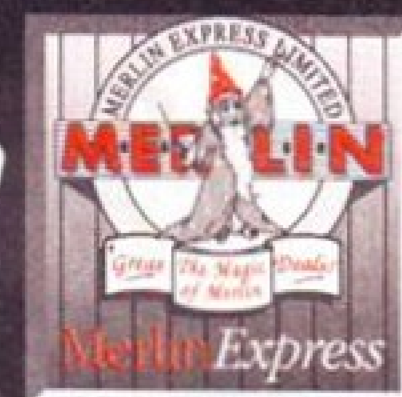
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After the marriage of the Amiga and snooker worked so well with Jimmy White's, can the same be done with the supposedly 'more accessible' pool?

Archer MacLean's Pool



Ordinary Eight Ball rules, which are probably the same as the ones you play down the pub. Here Nutts is lining up a shot, and selecting the strength of the shot by adjusting the length of the cue.

There haven't been many good pool and snooker games written for the Amiga, and it's not difficult to see why. Translating what is essentially a game that should be played while you're down the pub, under the influence of alcohol, on to the relatively clinical environment of the Amiga is welll nigh impossible.

Last year, though, a breakthrough in computer potting came with the arrival of *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* from Virgin Games. Written by Archer MacLean, who was previously responsible for such excellent games as *Dropzone* and *International Karate*, the game was widely acclaimed by Amiga gamers everywhere. To such an extent, in fact, that it is still in the top 20 full-games as I write this!

Now, Virgin and Archer have teamed up again (to the delight of Amiga-owning pool players) to produce *Archer MacLean's Pool*.

If you don't know already, *Whirlwind Snooker* was a first-person 3D game which made use of polygons to draw the table and the balls. The table could be rolled around using the mouse, and so viewed from any angle, and you could also zoom in and out at will. The table could even be tilted so that you could take a look at the ball positions from above. Basically, it was a superb game which played well and had loads of options.

" Again Archer has really gone to town on the features: Pool is very addictive and easy to play "

For *Pool*, Archer has taken the same code as he used in *Snooker*, taken the snookery bits out and put the pool bits in, and some more. Gone are the 15 reds and seven colours, and in are the pool-hall setups of seven reds, seven yellows and a black (8 ball).

We're going to pot

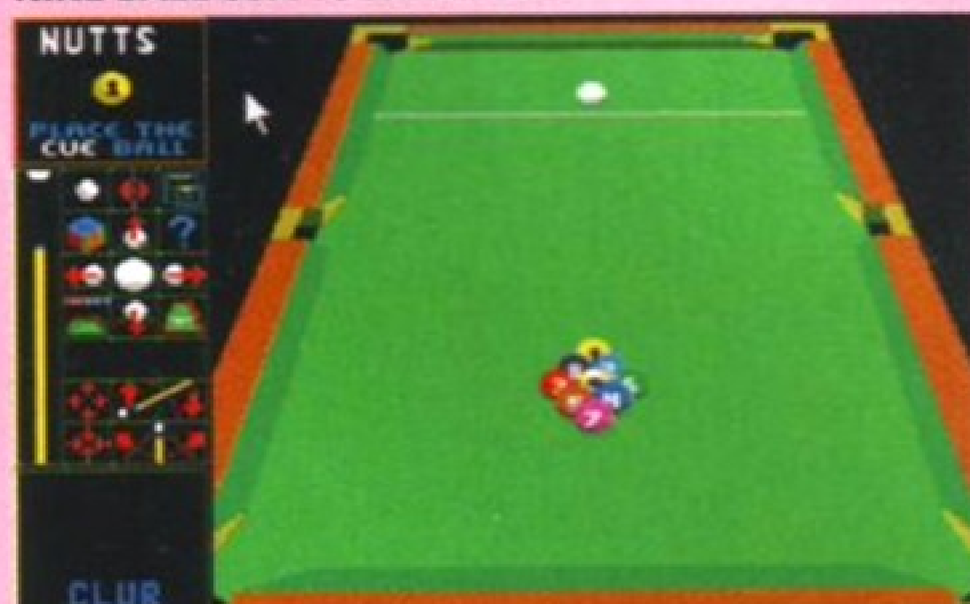
As with *Snooker*, the game is controlled using the mouse in conjunction with a number of icons in a menu bar at the edge of the screen (see panel below). The menu may be moved to above or to the left of the main play area, depending on your preference.

When you're lining up a shot, adding top-spin or screw to the cueball is easy by clicking on the appropriate arrow next to the cueball icon. If you're not sure about the line of a shot, then help is at hand from a projected line option, which is useful for doubles or plants. After these options are set, the strength of shot must be chosen by lengthening or shortening the cue icon. To shoot, just click on the cue ball icon, and let your Amiga do the rest.

THE RULES OF POOL

Archer MacLean's Pool offers you not one but three different types of pool rules. Here's what they are all about.

NINE BALL USA TOURNAMENT



Nine Ball: mainly featured to make the US players feel at home. But where's the blue baize?

Played with nine numbered balls. All the balls must be potted in numerical order, unless they are hit in a 'plant' (ie the cue ball hits the lower ball first, which goes on to hit and pot another ball).

The idea is to pot the nine ball first, so if you can manage to pot this using a plant, then you have won the game. If a foul is committed you don't get two shots, but the cue ball is allowed to be moved anywhere on the table.

EIGHT BALL UK COIN-OP

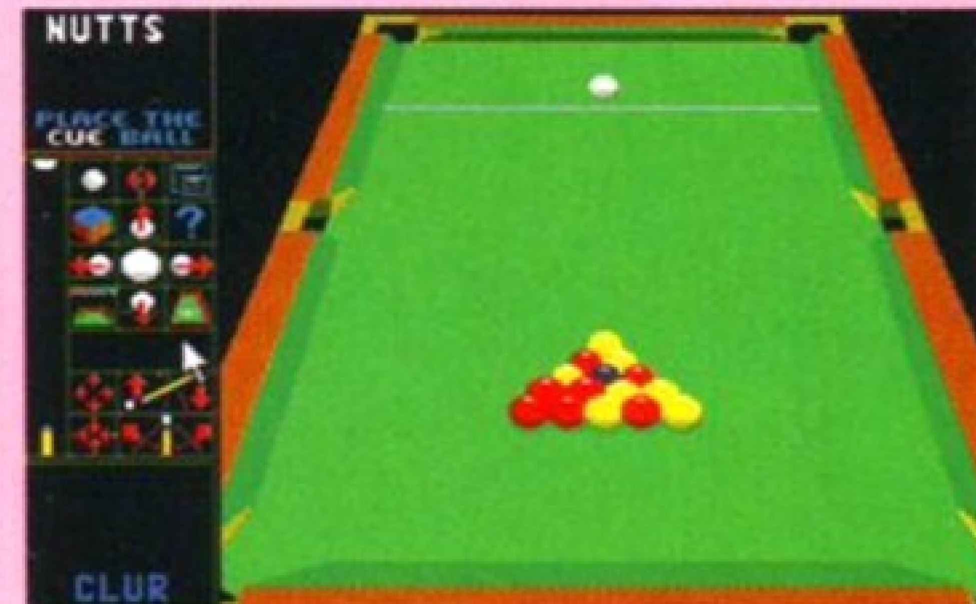


This is the one you normally play in your local pub with the pocketfuls of 20 pees.

Played with seven-red balls, seven yellow balls and a black (eight) ball, the aim of this version of the game is for each player to pot all of one set of colours followed by the Eight Ball.

If you commit a foul, your opponent will get two shots, and you may position the cue ball anywhere in the 'D'. If the black ball is potted before all the balls of the player's colour have been sunk, then it's 'Game Over' and time to leave the hall.

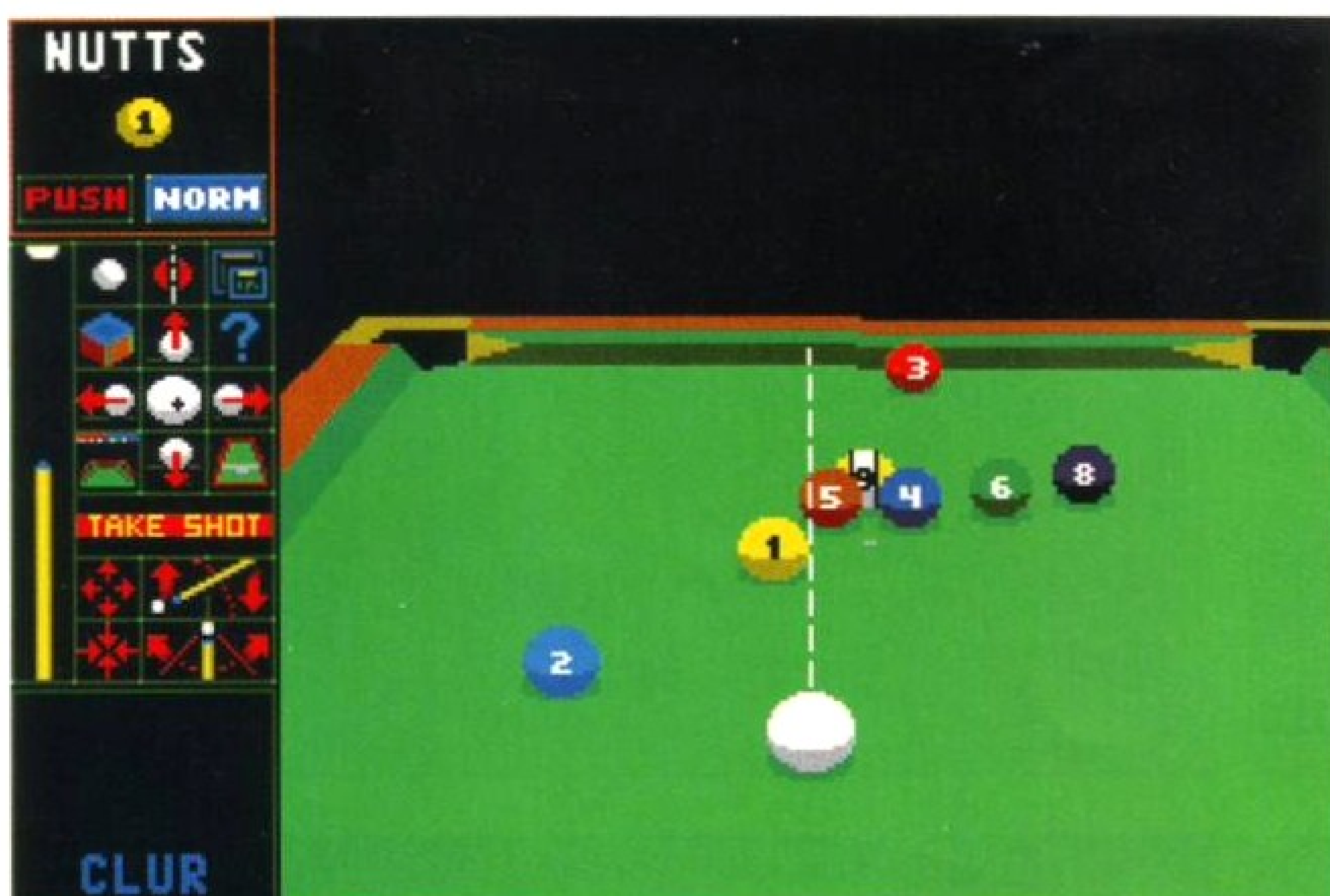
EIGHT BALL USA BAR TABLE



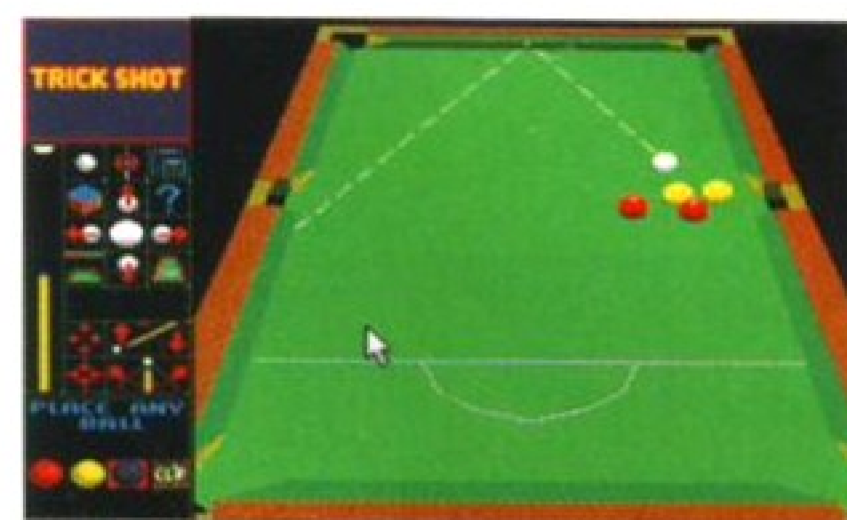
Another set of American rules, but this time it's only Eight Ball. Plenty of research has gone into this game.

This has basically the same rules as the British coin-op version except that at the end of the game you must name the pocket that the eight ball is to be potted into.

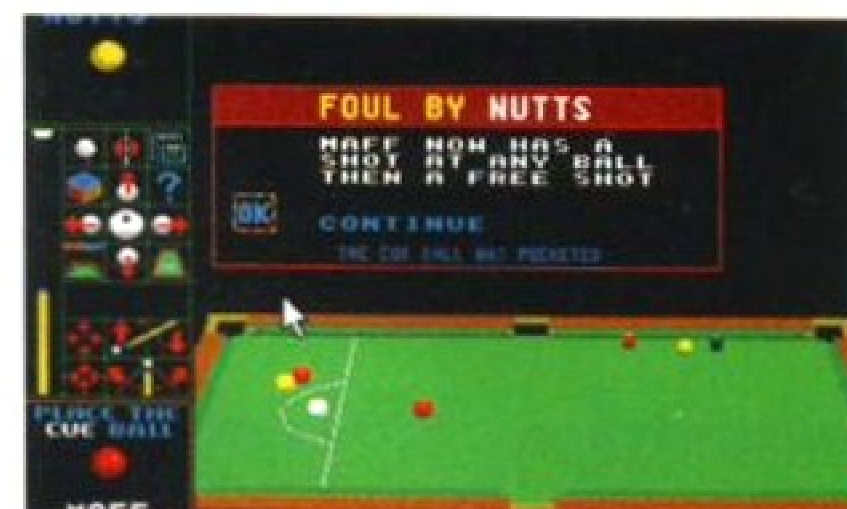
Like Nine Ball, you don't get two shots when a foul is committed, but the cue ball may be placed anywhere in the top quarter of the table, ready for you to line up a shot – which is going to be a definite advantage.



This is Nine Ball mode, which is my favourite of the three types. Here you must attempt to pot the Nine Ball, but you can't hit it directly without potting the others first. Life's not all roses, y'know.



The Trick Shot mode is similar to *Snooker's* – impress your friends with strange potting...



Because the pockets are much larger than in *Snooker*, the white often disappears.

Depending on the position of the cue ball on the table, some shots are more difficult to play than others. For instance, if the cue ball is placed up against a cushion and then it must be played away, then the cue may only be aimed at the top of the ball – just like real pool. It's touches like this which add a huge amount of realism to the game.

Pot plant

Again, Archer has gone to town on the features. As well as measuring the dimensions of real life pool tables, and including them in the game, he has also researched the actual current American pool-hall rules. Not only are the UK Eight-Ball rules included, but also the USA Eight-Ball and tournament Nine Ball rules (see panel on previous page). Each type plays differently, and follows the rules perfectly.

Hardened pool addicts may not like the fact that the numbers on the balls don't rotate while the balls are rolling, which is especially noticeable when playing nine ball. I personally don't find this a problem, and I would imagine that including the feature would slow the game down considerably.

Another feature that *Pool* has over *Snooker* is in the number of opponents available. Whereas *Snooker* had four, *Pool* has 30, and each one has a different playing ability. Their skills at pool are instantly recognisable by their names (such as 'Jimmy Brill', who is an excellent player, and 'Daft Debbie' who is not), so choosing an opponent to match your skills as you progress through the game shouldn't be difficult. It's still much better to play against human opponents, of course, but then that's the same with all multi–player games (see Page 66).

A tournament facility is provided which enables up to eight players to play together, with one or more may be set up as computer opponents from the 30 available. Because this obviously takes a long time to complete, it is possible to save and load the relevant data so that you can continue at a later date. The save option can also be used for ordinary games and trick shots.

There's even an option included which enables you to tweak the rules so that you can play the way you usually play. This is an important feature, because depending on where you are in the country, you will play slightly different rules, such as only one shot when a foul is committed on the black ball, or naming a pocket and sticking to it. It's little features like this which make the game so playable.

Pot luck

After a while, aiming a shot becomes very easy, and you find yourself becoming really engrossed in the game. If you're playing against the computer, you must try and plan your shots especially carefully, because most of the 30 opponents are very clinical, robotic players who will make you pay for miscalculated shots.

The pockets are a lot bigger on *Pool* than on *Snooker*, and the table is a lot smaller – so this makes it a game which is much easier to play than its predecessor. People who are bored quickly with *Snooker* because it's too slow and difficult will have a whale of a time with *Pool*, but fans of the original game may find it a little too easy. This applies to pool in real life too, though, so it's not a reflection on the quality of the game.

So what more can I say? *Pool* is a very addictive game with loads of nice touches which make it very easy to play and, unlike some games, it doesn't leave you frustrated because the computer has 'cheated'. It follows each set of rules exactly, and the large number of opponents with different levels of skill mean that even the novice pool player will feel instantly at home.

People who have played *Whirlwind Snooker* before will not find anything new graphically because, ultimately, it is a very similar game, but some would argue that it uses the same tried-and-trusted formula which made the original game a classic. Some experienced pool players may whinge that the numbers on the balls don't move when the balls do, but that's really the only thing that they could complain about.

So instead of going down the pub one evening when it's pouring with rain, get some beer and and a few mates and spend the evening playing this. You're guaranteed a great game, and you won't have arguments about who's providing the 20-pence pieces...

Andy Nuttall

THE CONTROLS AT A GLANCE



Archer MacLean's Pool
Virgin Games ■ £25.99

- Good control system, and very easy to play even for the novice.
- More accessible than *Whirlwind Snooker* so even the novice will feel at home immediately with *Pool*.
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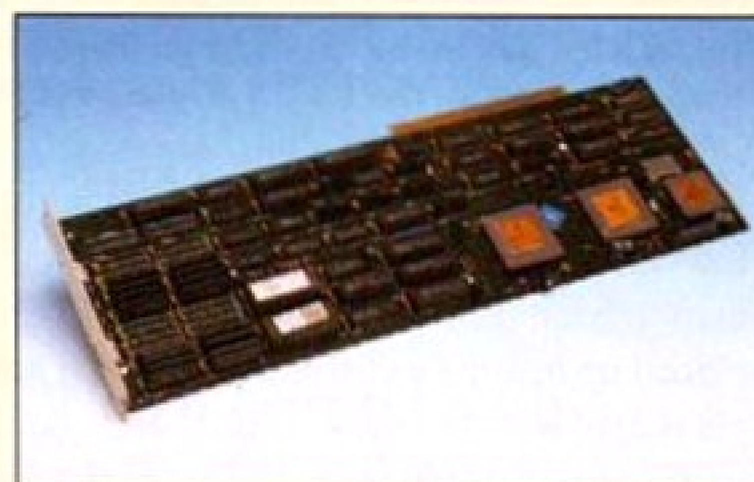
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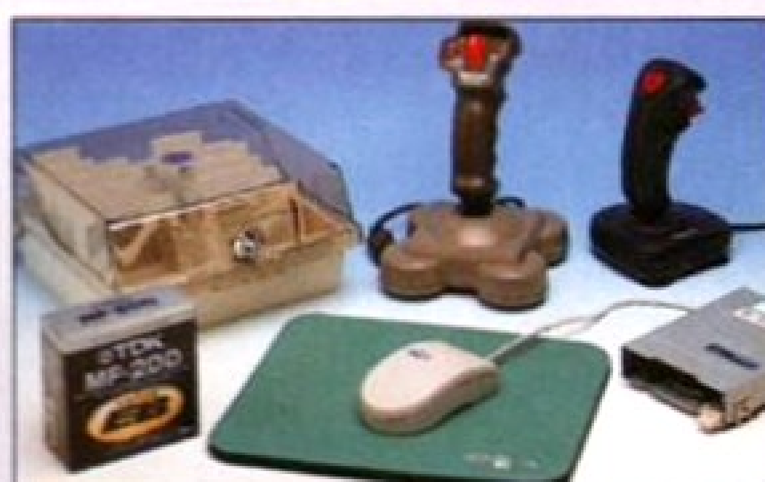
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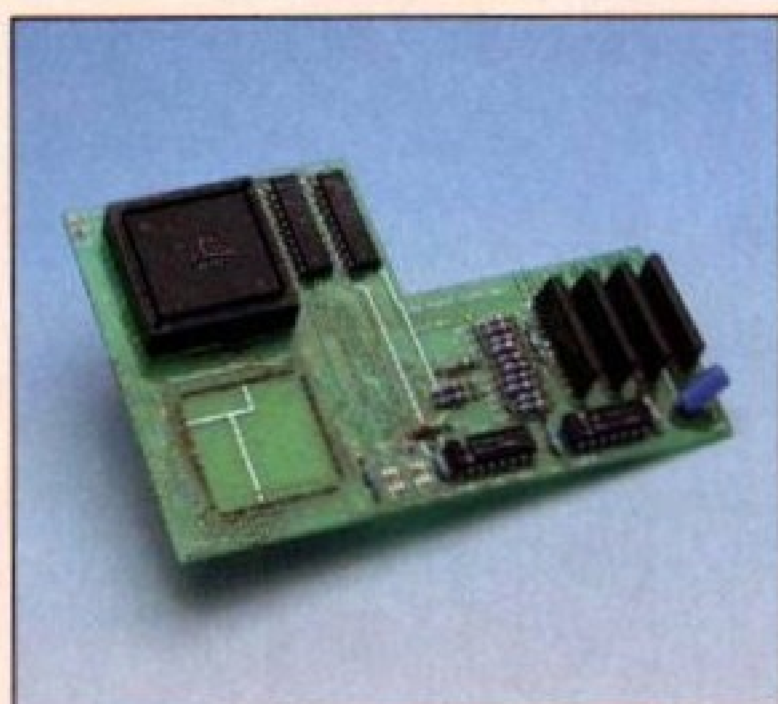
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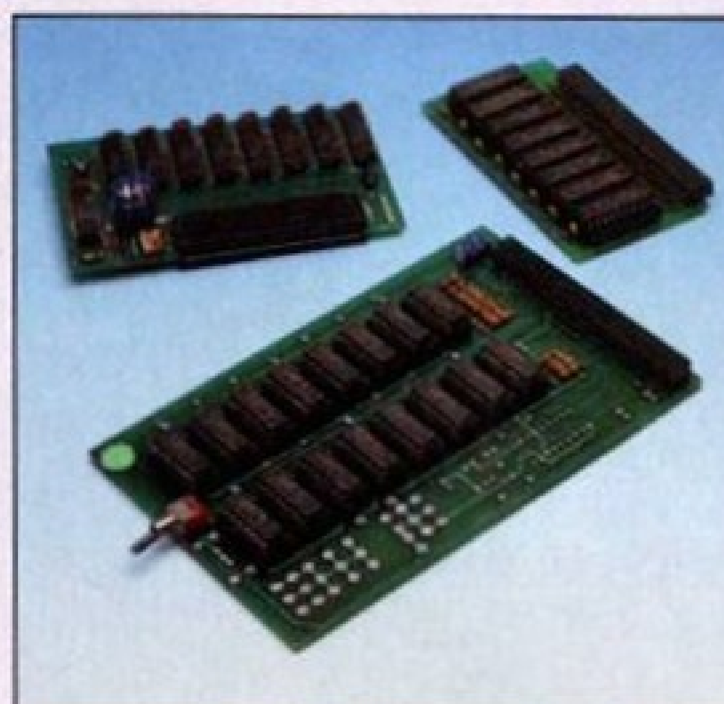




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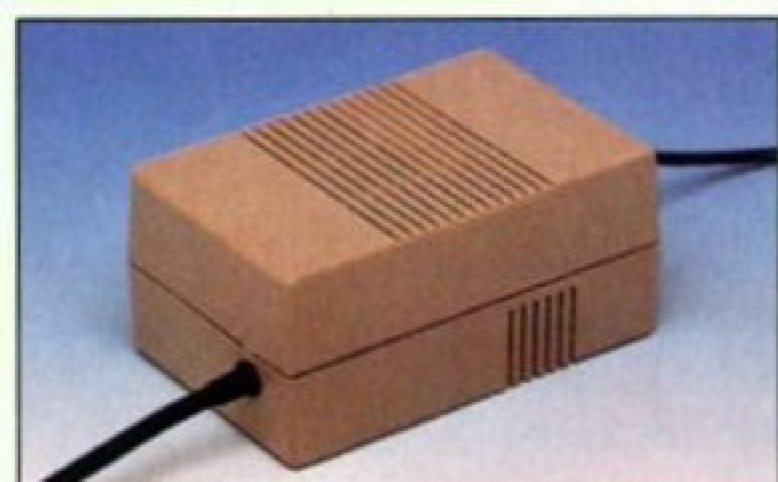
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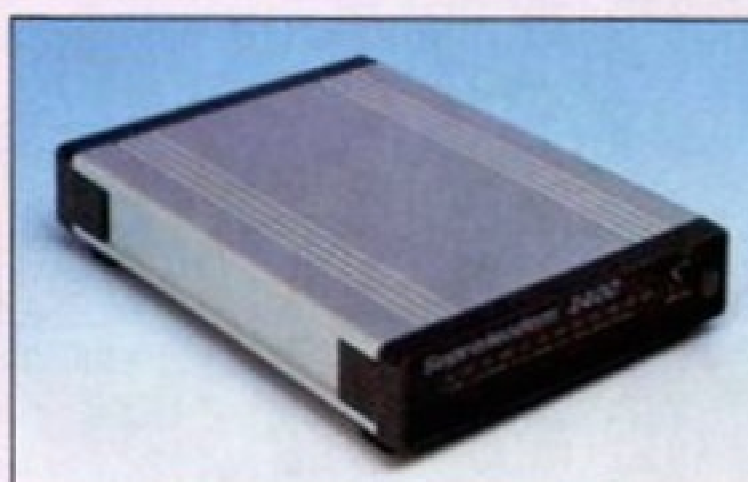
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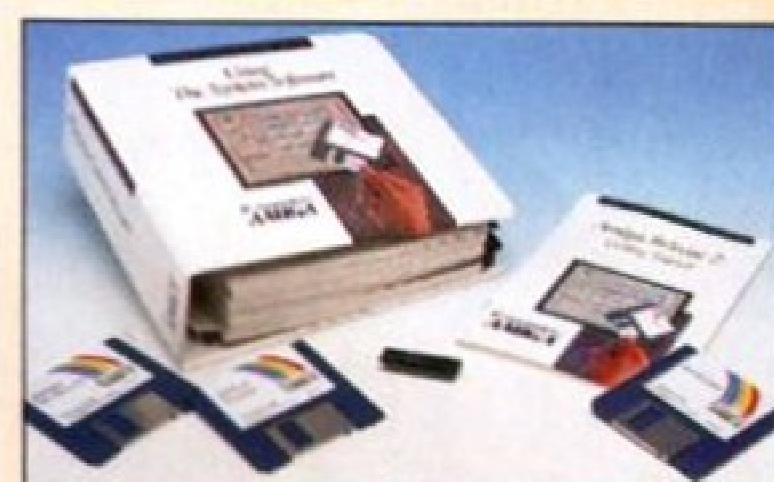
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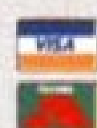
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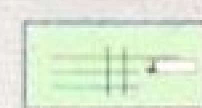
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Oh blast! I seem to have made a little boo boo. It looks as though I have not let go of my stick, and have made a foul mess.



20.66 seconds. Rubbish. That's third place. Maybe I should've jumped over the hurdles...

The Carl Lewis Challenge

Remember the good ol' days of 8-bit computers and those wondrous games like *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*, or *HyperSports* where you waggled your joystick so much that you had to buy a new one every weekend? Well those days are back, with a new kid on the block – Carl Lewis – and his very own endorsed Amiga challenge.

The game has two modes of operation: there is your standard waggle-and-play arcade mode, where all you have to do is to take lots of energy tablets to make sure your hand doesn't drop off from err... waggling too much. Then there's the fuller game where you have to train your athletes to the best of their ability, and then waggle your joystick to reach that ultimate goal of winning Gold.

Sound's like a lot of waggling whichever option you choose, and indeed there is. But thankfully, the programmers have included a couple of other control methods – rhythm and gearing. These are designed to relieve the strain on your joystick and provide you with the option to save your hands from repetitive strain injuries (RSI fact fans).

This is a nice little thought; very considerate, except that these control modes are actually quite crap and, in the end you'll simply find yourself reverting to good ol' waggling like a drug on ecstasy.

The game consists of five events – 100 metres, 110 metre hurdles, javelin, high jump and long jump. Now, I never knew that Carl Lewis competed in all these events, but I guess Psygnosis are allowed a little creative licence.

Now is not the time to take a nap. At least the high jump bag is nice and soft and comfortable and...



The 100 metres is just a case of a quick dash from one end of the athletics field to the other,. World records? Who needs 'em? I managed to do the dash of dashes in only 6.5 seconds! Linford would have been green.

The hurdles are almost exactly the same as 100 metres, except that every so often, as you are waggling you have to press the fire button to initiate a jump over a hurdle. Not difficult, just spot-on timing is all that's needed. And, at 8.64 seconds, another world record just falls into my hands!

Success does not come so easy in the javelin event. To determine the angle of projection, and throw your javelin, you just waggle and press your button. Easy. But the officials were not on my side: all I managed was to get myself disqualified. Whoops!

Aha! Now the high jump. Lovely. And it's quite easy: just waggle to run up to the bar while pressing fire to determine the angle of your jump. Once in the air, just press fire to lift your legs over the bar. I leapt a good 2.5m here. Excellent. Finally it's the long jump – more waggling to determine your take-off angle and that's it. I managed a super human 15.8m here. That's 52 feet!

But, if you're more of a decision-maker than an athlete, the tactical side of the game might appeal to you more. Here you have to decide which event each of your athletes will train in, how frequently, intensely and for how long. (See the box on the left entitled 'Discipline Yourself'.)

To sum up, this game is rather on the tedious side. It's far too easy to achieve World Record-breaking results, even with a mediocre team of athletes, so the incentive to get this game up and running again is zilch. I'd be more inclined to pay around £6, not £26, even if it is a Psygnosis game.

Asam Ahmad

DISCIPLINE YOURSELF

Different events require different combinations of attributes...



This log book is used to determine who needs training in what discipline. Those with red blobs need some special attention.

ISOTONICS	Very tough weight training for power, speed and agility
ISOMETRICS	Resistance weight training for power
ACCELERATION	Stop-start for power, speed and agility
HOLLOW RUNNING	Sprinting, pausing and repeating, for stamina.
CIRCUIT TRAINING	Continuous muscle exercises for stamina, power and agility.
FARTLEK RUNNING	Informal fast and slow running for stamina and speed.
STATIC STRETCHING	Tough stretching exercises for agility.
INTERVAL TRAINING	Formal fast, recovery, fast run.
REPETITION RUNNING	Fast run, long pause and repeat for.
BALLISTIC STRETCHES	Rhythm and momentum stretches.

The Carl Lewis Challenge
Psygnosis ■ £25.99

- OK music that accompanies the game. Not quite Monserrat and Freddie though.
- Some good graphic touches, but it wouldn't win any gold medals.
- Choice is limited: you only get five events to compete in.
- Limited gameplay, no variation, and there isn't much of a challenge here either.
- No skill involved in it at all.



56%

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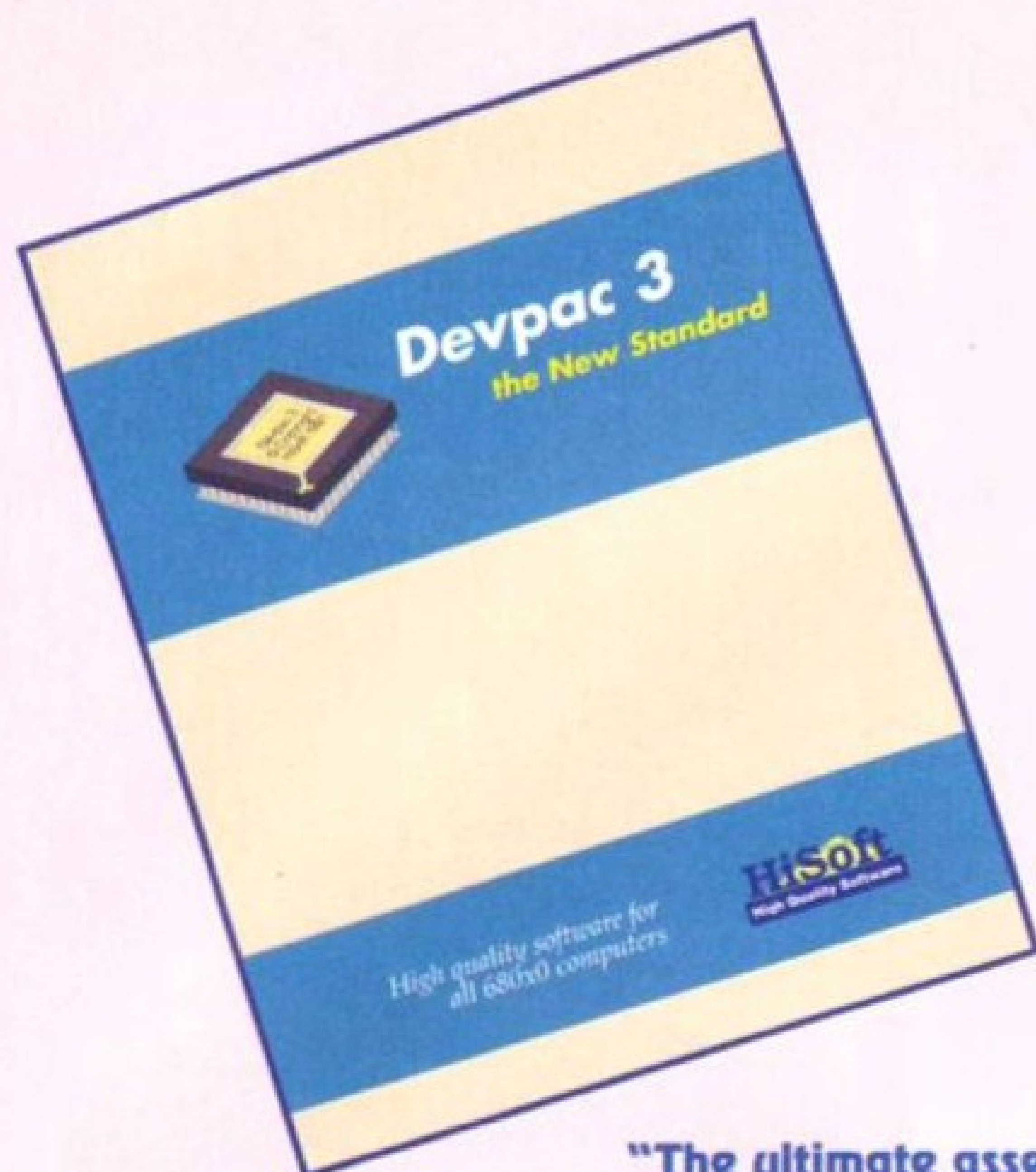
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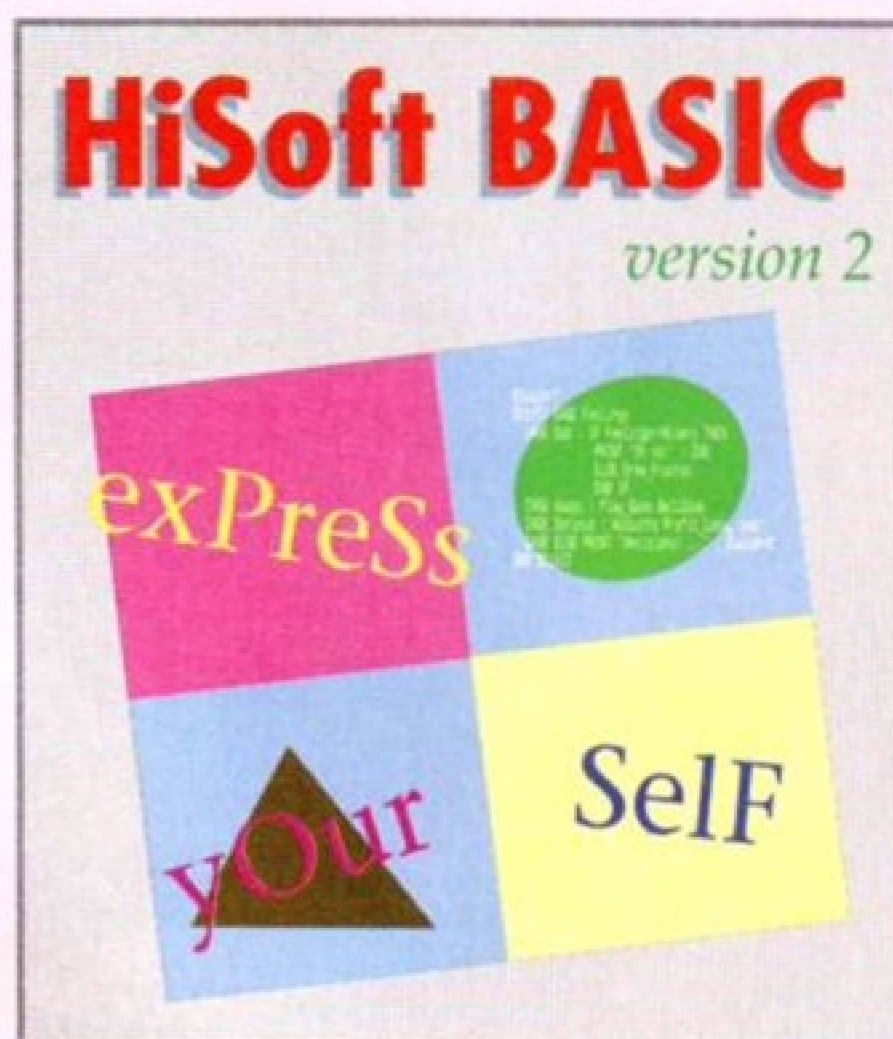
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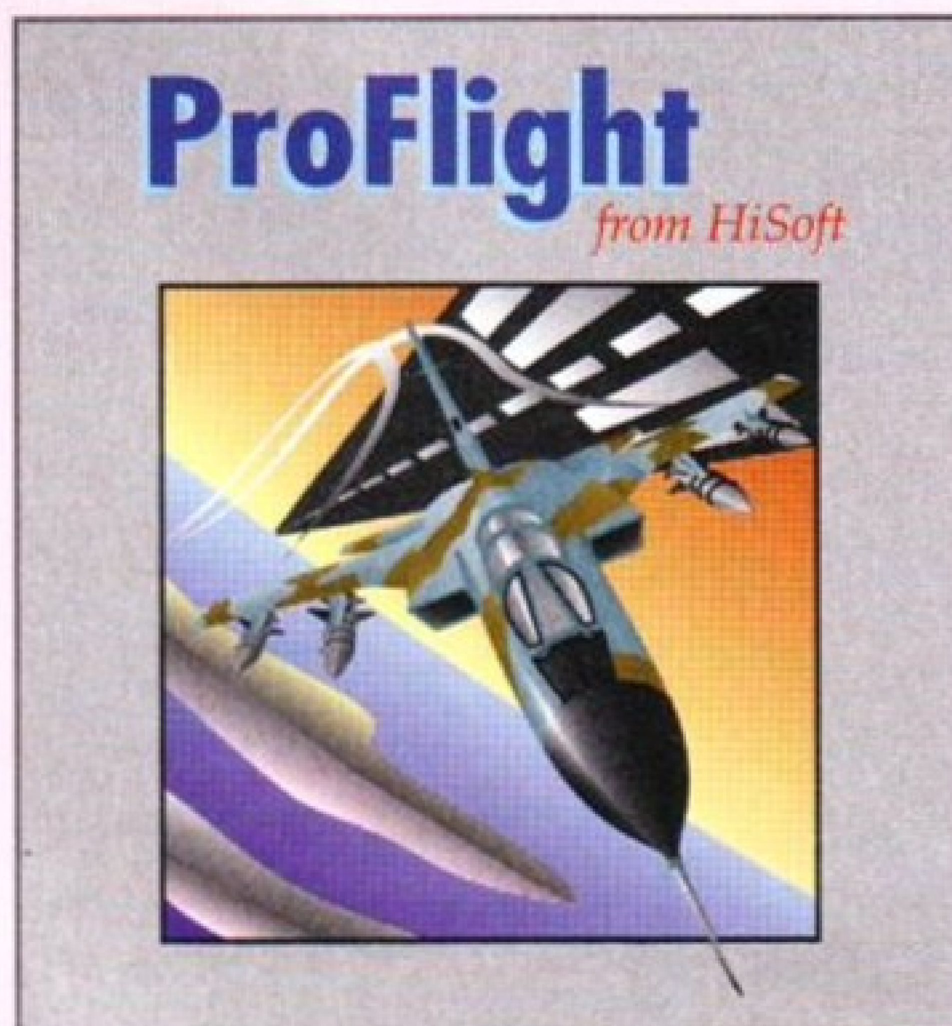
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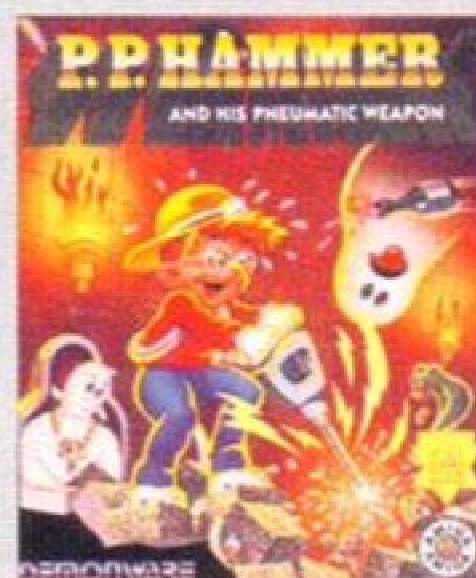
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"So Jimmy, what do you make of the new back-pass rule?" "Thanks Des. Well all I can say is that it will be good for the fans, that it wasn't the chairman's fault, and that it won't worry the the Germans" "Er... Jimmy" "Yes Des" "Belt-up mate"

Match Of The Day

One of the accepted rules of football is: 'Jimmy Hill – you love him or you hate him'. There are no in-betweens. Obviously the BBC have realised that the majority's view of Jimmy was shifting to one of these extremes and so replaced him with Gary Lineker and Alan Hansen (on *Match of the Day* at least). Obviously, Zepplin haven't cottoned on to this and have retained Jimmy alongside Des 'Twinky-Smoov' Lynham.

What's all this got to do with the game? Simply that it plays like a game that the chinned-one would enjoy (and that Des could understand).

The game is played solely by mouse control. You click on icons to chose various appointments to see people. On the left of your screen is your personal organiser; on the right is a bank of icons. Take an icon from the bag, and drag it on to a vacant time slot – that's a major part of the game. Each page represents a day in a week at a club of your choice. There are five time slots per page.

You don't have to fill up all of them, but it is wise to keep a busy schedule, meeting with people, and with the chairman, talking to the fans, and checking on how the team's doing.

Your 'Lads' have a match every week, so you have to plan your time in advance depending on how well your team is performing. This is a bit difficult when you first start the game, as your team haven't played any games yet. The fact that your team starts off in Division 4 does mean that your players aren't going to be tremendously good, so in the first week it is wise to send out your scout.

One good point about the game is that if your scout, or any staff member, isn't pulling his weight, you can sack him and hire anew. Everybody has a job to do and everybody is expendable in this game, even you. If you don't employ a method of keeping yourself busy, and let the club run down hill, you can be sure that the chairman will call a 'meeting'.



"So Jimmy, have we anything exiting to look forward to this afternoon?" "No, Sainty." "Wrong channel Jim.'

For the most part, meeting people is part of a manager's job. You must lias with the trainer and the physio to make sure that all your players are performing to their best, and that if they have been injured, that they recover as quickly as possible. If of course you do have some unruly players in your squad, it is time to have a stern talk with them, and if necessary exclude him from your current playing team with a view to selling him.

The long bore game

Having gone through the week meeting loads of people (even fans), and doing lots of deals, you also have some meetings that are made for you, such as by another club when they want to buy a player from your squad.

The final icon that crop up at the end of the week, of course, is the Match Of The Day icon. This is where you see the highlights of your team's performance every week with (just to make it all so real) commentary from Jimmy and Desmond!

Although there are plenty of options, the gameplay is quite shallow. The highlights of every Saturday game make even a home match at Wimbledon or Cambridge seem exciting, stylish football. The interaction between the actual football side of things and the managerial side is very, very limited. The result? *Match of the Day* fails to hook you to any real extent. Ultimately, this shows that having a big name licence doesn't always make a good game. The Amiga's the loser in the end Jim.

Asam Ahmad & The Team.

ONE WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A FOOTY MANAGER

1. Meet with the supporters club to get opinions.
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3. Have a meeting with the team physio.
4. Do some dodgy dealings with other clubs.
5. Select your super squad of players.
6. Meet with the club trainer to beef-up your team.
7. What do the press think of you?
8. Have a 'chat' with some unruly team members if there are any opposition players worth poaching.
10. Have a meeting with the stern-looking chairman.
11. Time for Jimmy and Desmond...
12. Save your progress to disk, and load past games.
13. Check your fixtures for future games.
14. Check your team's score card.
15. Calculate your team's finances.



Match of the Day
Zepplin Games ■ £25.99

- Easy to play if you're good a moving icons.
- Easy to get bored of if you don't like icons.
- Jimmy and Des are as in real life. Dull.
- The actual football elements are marred pathetic graphics on the 'highlights'.
- A manual that could be the tactical guide for non-league managers – it's very thin.



56%



Hitting a bend at 120mph while heading straight for the trackside is probably not a good idea. My advice is to buy a car.

Red Zone

Red Zone? Isn't that an area where you can't park your car? Well no, it's the latest motorbike simulator from Psygnosis. You have the chance to become champion motorcyclist of the world, but first you must win all of your races. To do this, you must make your way around 10 tracks from around the world (Silverstone etc) against six of the most fiendish competitors you will ever find on a motor track.

Before you race you must choose a bike, and qualify. You have the choice of manual or automatic gears. Now most people would think 'Great I'll choose auto 'cos it's nice 'n' easy,' and indeed it is. But you don't quite have the control that a manual gearbox gives you, and this is vital. Next you can set up details about the course you want to ride on, such as scenery, number of laps and things like that, to tune the game so it runs as fast and as smoothly as possible. Once you have chosen your options, you are provided with a sort of code. This enables you to define the system more quickly the next time you play it, by simply entering the code on the options screen.

Danger zone?

So what's so special about this game? Well instead of the standard view you get from most bike sims – looking at the action from behind your bike such as in *Super HangOn* – you have a first-person view of your bike instrument panel. Excellent! *Indy 500* on a bike. The thing is you're on a bike not in a car, and when you turn a corner it's more a case of leaning than steering. This means that, due to the view the game gives you, your world seems very unstable as you take bends at 100 mph. You often find yourself hoping you don't graze your knee. Full brownie points for realism.



The guy on the green bike is in front of me at the moment, but not for long. I shall turn my super-power turbo boost and negotiate my overtaking manoeuvre.

Duff zone?

Where it doesn't match up to *Indy*, however, is that there is nothing to compel you to keep going in your task to win the championship. The simulation is realistic, though, especially when you are turning a corner, and even when you crash you have to use the cursor keys to manoeuvre your bike back on to the track.

The control system is a bit touchy, especially if you are using the mouse: the bike tends to fly across the screen at an alarming rate. You can be travelling along the track, minding your own business, when suddenly this nasty bend comes along. You turn the bend in what you think to be a decent manoeuvre, but unfortunately you seem to be travelling horizontally towards the yellow barrier at the side of the road. You hit one side, and immediately fly to the other, and back and back until you come to a stop and have to reposition your bike.



Oh dear, I seemed to have knocked one of my competitors to the ground. Of course it was his fault, he got in my way.

This control system, accurate as it may be, is just too complicated for a game of this kind. OK, it's realistic, but it takes a lot of getting used to. If you can stand the way it works fine, but I like a game I can get into immediately, no messing around, just boot and play. Close but no cigar, I'm afraid.

Asam 'Easy Rider' Ahmad AF

Red Zone
Psygnosis ■ £25.99

- Very realistic. But the automatic gearing heighten this over and above the manual.
- Some good, fast vector graphics, reminiscent of *Indianapolis 500*.
- Configurable to run as fast as possible on the system you use.
- Tricky control system: it's too touchy with the mouse and it's crap with the joystick
- Limited variation in gameplay



64%

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Travellers we, on a restless sea. And currently plotting a course towards the treacherous, jagged reef that is budget software. Asleep at the helm, your captain, **James Leach**...

Cheap 'n' Cheerful



Bank! I must get to a bank! Never let it be said Tornado pilots are less than sensible with money. Also never let it be said the enemy aircraft in *F1* look like real planes.

F1 Tornado

Zeppelin Platinum ■ £7.99

Are you the sort of person who gets a thrill out of flying through a valley in Wales at 600 mph. If so, get yourself trained and hop into a real Tornado. On the other hand, if you'd prefer to drive gently down a Welsh valley on your way to an eisteddfod, you might want to buy *F1* to play instead. You whiz along, waiting for dots to appear on a radar. When they do, you've got a third of a second to steer towards them. They turn into triangular planes, whereupon a targeting box appears on your HUD and you open fire.

It's fast, it's quick and it isn't slow. But there is very little detail and the graphics plummet to the depths of angular minimalism.

Verdict 47%



Get out of the way or I'll throw a tantrum, ask for an infeasible amount of money and resign when you agree! And my moustache is withdrawing its support as well.

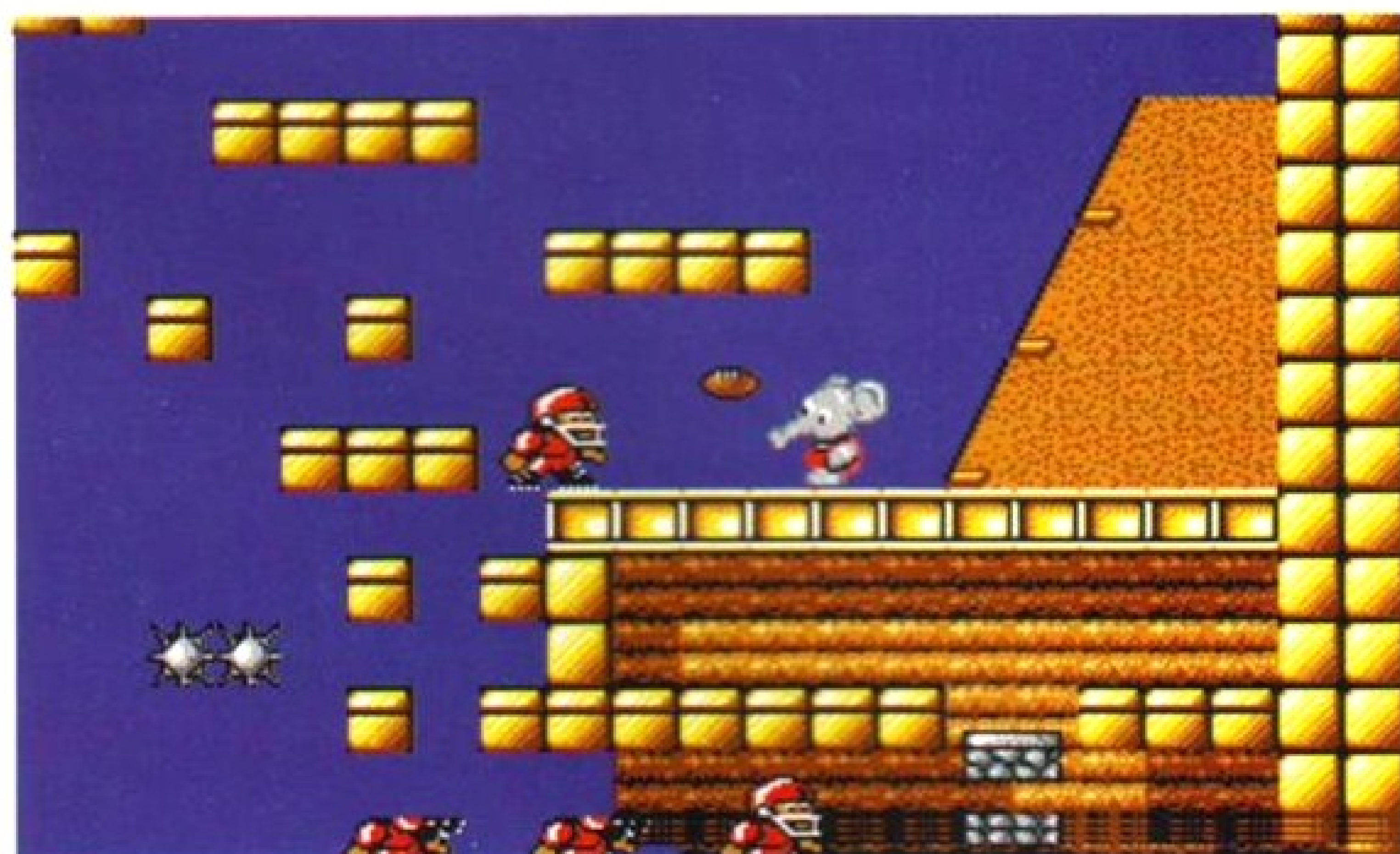
Super Monaco Grand Prix

Kixx ■ £7.99

Years ago, before the Earth cooled and a collection of molecules called Mr Crammond wrote *Formula One Grand Prix*, this was *the* racing-car game. It was a lot of fun as a coin-op and now it's a lot of fun as an Amiga game.

You race around a 3D circuit trying to qualify. Then you race around the same circuit with a load of other cars getting in the way. It's fast, the graphics are impressive (for their time) although they haven't aged as well as Jane Fonda. So the graphics are fine, the sound is good, it's exciting, it's got a nice arcade feel to it and it's tough but not too tough. What more do you want? Go out and buy it.

Verdict 80%



Nonplussed by American culture, CJ is felled by a pass from a dog dressed as a Quarterback. And rightly so. He could have learned about gridiron from Channel Four.

CJ in the USA

CodeMasters ■ £7.99

CJ is an elephant with a cute face and a very small body. Realising that these attributes make him perfect for intercontinental travelling, he decides to visit the United States. But no sooner has he arrived than people try to kill him.

So CJ is thrown into a world of platforms, bun-throwing and food-collecting through three large and taxing levels. Ultimately, he's trying to rescue his family from an evil hunter, but don't waste your intelligence on this nonsense. Just view *CJ in the USA* as a colourful, fun platform game with added bits.

The game is cute, nicely drawn and fun for those who like cute, nicely drawn things.

Verdict 79%



Flipping heck! (This joke has just won the 'saddest pinball joke in *Amiga Format*' award) If you wish to help it celebrate, it'll be down the pub from eight onwards.

Soccer Pinball

CodeMasters ■ £7.99

This is a game of two halves. One half wants to be soccer and the other is determined to be pinball. In fact, the pinball half is much larger than the soccer half, making it distinctly lop-sided and mathematically improbable.

The concession to soccer is the table is green, with a few choice phrases from our national sport written on it. The problem is the release of *Pinball Dreams* rains on *Soccer Pinball*'s parade, but it could be so much better. You have four sets of flippers, but the ball spends so much time diving between the bouncy points-scoring things in the middle. Then it dives between the flippers, causing you to swear profusely.

Verdict 46%



Arnie does his impression of the running man. He's running at another running man. Two more running men are running after Arnie. All in all, it's a screen full of runners.

Total Recall

Hit Squad ■ £7.99

Arnie has got confused, lost his memory and been in several fights. After a visit to the Rekall company (motto: 'We can remember it for you wholesale™'), he finds himself in a multi-level platform game, with car-racing bits attached.

You control the big guy as he rushes around the platformy bits, collecting useful things and punching or shooting anybody who gets in the way. On later levels you also control the big guy's car, as it races up a vertically scrolling road. The idea is to avoid, punch, or shoot any other cars that get in the way. Arnie doesn't appear to be a great believer in variety.

The game plays a little sluggishly for my tastes. The graphics aren't anything to phone the National Gallery about, and the gameplay is frustrating without being particularly rewarding if you manage to beat it. Still, the platforms are filled with puzzles to solve, there's a lot of killing and the whole thing is large to the point of being pretty huge. The overall impression is one of a competent game which doesn't push the Amiga to within a tenth of its abilities.

If you're a fan of the big guy, you might be mollified to find pictures of him dotted around and between the levels during the intro. It won't make up for the lack of real substance in the game, but it adds a bit of quality and will please Arnie's fans, especially those who flocked, screaming, to see *Total Recall* at the cinema (and who have probably bought it on video in both wide-screen and normal-o-vision).

Verdict 79%



Being chronologically-challenged, Dynamo plays with the National Grid (unaware of the dangers) as he wends his forgetful way to, where was it again? The war, probably.

Captain Dynamo

CodeMasters ■ £7.99

Be warned; Captain Dynamo is an old person. As such, his creaky bones don't work quite as well as they used to. So from the start, you're aware that this is no normal platform game. Plot? Well OK, if you want plot, here it is – another oldster, called Flyswatter, has nicked a load of diamonds and sprinkled them around the launch site of a moon-rocket. He intends blasting off in this thing to seek a new lunar life. He seems to have overlooked one small fact: he's bound to die when he arrives (because there's no air in space). But you, as Captain Dynamo, must do your best to collect the diamonds and stop him.

The game is played as a vertical platform affair, with all the 'falling-off-and-dropping-for-miles' hassles that you would expect from such an affair. The Captain has the ability to bounce high in the air, as well as move cautiously along the booby-trapped platforms. And basically you've got to plug away until you've reached the top.

It's not very inspired, and using an old person is a gimmick that doesn't amuse for very long. But it's nicely done in the traditional Codies cartoon style, so if your eyes aren't what they were you should be OK with it.

What more can I say? It's got everything you'd expect to see in a (CodeMasters) platform game. It's playable, it's nicely thought out and ultimately you'll have seen something like it before, unless you're an old person and have dementia. *(Isn't this all a bit ageist? – Ed.)*

Verdict 67%

Tri Star Simulations

Soundware International ■ £9.99

Three games on two disks and not a simulation in sight, to be frank. But let us not be disheartened. Let us review them on their own merits. And then let's go down the pub.



The split screen effect makes it a tad tough to get any idea of what's ahead of you.

Turbo Trax

It's a cross between *Supersprint* and *Railroad Tycoon*. You have to stay on the circuit and 'steer' round the corners by pointing the joystick into them. Obstacles like chicanes, oil, cross-overs, thin bits and so on, make things marginally more interesting, but if this is the sort of thing you're fascinated by, why don't you save a bit more and buy Scalextric? You get something tangible then, even though you have to scrabble under the sofa for the crappy Sierra rally car that always comes off on that top corner.



Airball makes a remarkably fine door for a rabbit hutch or the enclosure of any similar small mammal.

Airball

This is similar to the old *Knight Lore* game on the Spectrum. You bounce through a load of 3D isometric rooms, escaping baddies and collecting goodies. The maze of rooms is pretty large and the incentive to explore them is in inverse proportion to this.

It's another boring game. The rooms are tiny and occupy the centre of the screen, marooned in a sea of black background. And don't think this makes the whole thing atmospheric; it doesn't. It just makes the game easier to turn off.



Aren't you glad when you cleaned the car, you remembered to put fresh ammo in the drums?

Major Motion

Not a *Catch-22* character, but a car racing game. You drive a car out the back of a lorry and belt along some roads, overtaking other cars. You have a pair of machine-guns, with the option on plenty more weaponry once you get far enough into the game. It's a bit like *The Spy Who Loved Me* except that the sprites are bigger. The thing is though *Major Motion* should be called *Sergeant Motion*, it's that dull.

Verdict 43%



Today's gamesplayers are spoilt with games like *Monkey Island*, but where did graphical adventures come from? **Andy Nuttall** digs into his dim and distant past to explain where it all began...



The Lost Treasures of Infocom

If you were to mention the words *Secret of Monkey Island*, *Hook* and *Lure of the Temptress* to the average games-player of today, they would know exactly what you were talking about: point-and-click graphical adventures. Such games have become immensely popular over the last couple of years, mainly due to the advent of machines such as the Amiga with its superb graphics and large memory.

How many, I wonder, know about the history of these fabulous games? Mention the words *Planetfall*, *Enchanter* and *Zork* today and you're likely to get a blank look in return. Well, here's a potted history...

Advent-ure

In the mid-70s, when computers were still relatively new and they took up the space of several rooms, the world's first computer adventure was born. Called, strangely enough, *Advent*, it was similar in style to a novel because it was conveyed only by text. Players would enter commands using only two words, for example, 'Go North', 'Take Sword', 'Hit goblin', so the game was severely limited.

In 1977, though, two computer scientists at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) got together and created their own masterpiece. Again using text only, the game was much larger and employed an excellent interpreter, or 'parser', which enabled whole sentences to be entered and recognised. They called their system 'Interactive Fiction'.

With the advent of home computers, the programmers, Marc Blank and Dave Lebling, began writing Interactive Fiction full-time, and founded Infocom. Because their games were so large, they required lots of memory which just wasn't available on home computers. Thus the games were written for disk-only systems, which gave them the capacity they needed.

Computers with memories as large as the Amiga's, though, could run entire Infocom games, and as such the new machines gave the company a chance to expand their games and employ a new upgraded parser, called Interactive Fiction Plus. The first two games which were released using this system were *A Mind Forever Voyaging* and *Trinity* – both were acclaimed.

However, with the new machines came superb graphics capabilities, and companies such as Rainbird began producing adventure games with stunning images. As such, the public's attention was moved from text-only type games over to the new breed. Infocom, however, continued to produce text-only adventures, and although their many fans continued to buy them the general public turned away. In 1988, the company was bought out by Activision, and soon afterwards closed down.

Anyway, all is not lost because Activision have resurrected all the games, and released 20 of them in this one neat package. We have taken a look at all the adventures, given them each an individual rating, and then rated the package as a whole at the end.

The Zork Trilogy

Originally written on a mainframe, *Zork* was split into three different games to run on home computers. It could be described as a role-playing game crossed with a novel, and it takes place mostly underground. You play a treasure seeker who must visit the ruins of the Great Underground Empire in search of vast wealth. Various fantasy characters try to block your way, but the most impressive is the Grue, an indescribable beast who only attacks when your lantern gives out...

***Zork 1* is pretty easy to complete, whereas *2* and *3* take a bit more practice. The Underground Empire is a large place, and there are many characters to meet and objects to pick up and use. I haven't played these games for years, but it's surprising how many good memories they bring back. A little dated perhaps, but you can't really call yourself an adventure gamer until you've played *Zork*.**

Verdict 75%

Planetfall

A light-hearted game describing the adventures of a lower-class space cadet shipwrecked on what seems to be a deserted planet. Teaming up with a lonely but annoying robot called Floyd, you have to explore the planet and discover its dark secret. A great game, not too difficult for hardened adventurers, although it does help to think laterally sometimes.

Verdict 75%

Stationfall

Continuing on from *Planetfall*, this game sets you as a pen-pushing administrator aboard the largest ship in the starfleet. You're given an assignment to take a spacetruck and pick up some forms from a nearby space station. Normal request? Nah, this is Infocom! A large game, and very difficult. Prepare to spend literally weeks stuck on the spacestation tearing your hair out!

Verdict 85%

Moonmist

A ghost story set in an old castle deep in Cornwall. You play an American detective who has been asked by an old friend to investigate mysterious goings-on in the area. Lots of interesting characters, with many puzzles and riddles, and an eerie sense of foreboding which builds up further into the game.

Verdict 85%

Enchanter

A fantasy adventure which casts you as a young wizard who is chosen to rid his people's land of an evil presence. You have great power, but limited experience; this is the ultimate test. A great game which doesn't show its age. The easiest of the *Enchanter* games, but still fairly difficult!

Verdict 75%

Sorcerer

In this the second installment of the *Enchanter* saga, Belboz, your teacher and leader of the Guild of Enchanters, is troubled by evil spirits. He then vanishes, and it is up to you to discover why. Another game which I found difficult, but then it is advanced level so I suppose it's to be expected.

Verdict 74%



The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy

DON'T PANIC! For those of you who've never read the *Hitchhiker's* trilogy, get out of your closet and do so! It's widely acclaimed as a classic tale, where an ordinary bloke is rescued from Earth seconds before it is destroyed to make way for an interstellar by-pass.

If you have read the book, and you're still relatively sane, then rest assured that the game does not follow the books in great detail – but it was co-written by Douglas Adams, so the humour level remains the same.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD 91%

Spellbreaker

Now that you have taken over from Belboz as the sparkly new leader of the Guild of Enchanters, a crisis situation occurs in your land which causes magic to fail. A conflict between good and evil ensues...

You really should try to tackle the other two games in this excellent trilogy first, because this is by far and away the most difficult of game that Infocom have ever produced. Hardened adventurers and fantasy heads will love it.

Verdict 85%

Starcross

In your job as the pilot of a mining ship, scouring the asteroid belt for black holes to harness, you are more than used to living a fairly tedious, mundane and humdrum existence – until, that is, you meet up with a large alien spacecraft from another galaxy...

Starcross is a game with a similar feel to *Planetfall*, except for one thing: it is much, much more difficult. It's easy to start with, but gets more and more involved as the plot unfolds.

Verdict 74%

Ballyhoo

Hanging around after the circus has finished its show, you hope to catch a glimpse of some behind-the-scenes performances. Instead, you are drawn into a dangerous situation when the circus owner's daughter is kidnapped, and you try to find her.

One of my favourites, *Ballyhoo* has a quite excellent plot which is highly realistic and charged with atmosphere.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD 90%

Infidel

The Egyptian desert beckons you to come in search of one of its lost pyramids. You must pit your wits against the Ancient Egyptians to find the pyramid and enter it, and discover treasures beyond your wildest dreams. An excellent story which is both exciting and compelling, with a good atmosphere to boot.

Verdict 77%

Suspended

A definite Krypton Factor feel pervades as you play this game, in which you are all alone on a semi-automated planet. Your computer has woken you from cryogenic suspension because only you can save the planet from destruction. You cannot move, but you can communicate with a series of six robots, each with a specific ability such as sight and hearing.

This is an adventure for people who enjoy solving puzzles and relish a challenge. For normal adventurers, however, the method of controlling six robots simultaneously may become too much to handle. When you play, have several notebooks, a few pens and some cans of Coke to hand at all times.

Verdict 75%

Deadline

The first of three thriller adventures, in which you play a detective given 12 hours to investigate the death of a wealthy man. The authorities say that he committed suicide, but you think differently. You should keep a record of all the events in this game, as it's pretty deep. A nice touch is that many different endings are available depending on which decisions you make in the game, so each time you play the ending could be different. Great for Whodunit? fans.

Verdict 73%

Witness

Another Whodunit type of story; this time a man is killed, and it falls to you to gather evidence to present at the defendant's trial. Once again, several endings are available depending on what you do in your investigation. It's not that a hard game to get into, but cracking the case could be tricky.

Verdict 75%

Suspect

Slight twist to the story here, as you can probably imagine from the title. You are framed for a murder you did not commit, and you only have a short time to prove your innocence.

Not only that, but you must also discover proof of who did do it. An interesting angle on the usual detective story, and it works well.

Verdict 76%

Zork Zero

A recent game which is a prequel to the original *Zork* trilogy. *Zork Zero* is set in the days when the Great Underground Empire was still thriving, and the Flatheads ruled the land. A curse threatens to bring down the Empire, and the chief Flathead offers a large reward to anyone who gets rid of it. Naturally, you attempt to oblige...

This game was Infocom's first attempt to keep up with technology and include some graphics - no pictures, a compass instead. Fortunately the text is up to the usual standard, and there are hints and maps thrown in on-line to spice it up.

Verdict 77%

Beyond Zork

An update on the original *Zork* story, this casts you as a peasant who must seek out the fabled treasure known as the Coconut of Quendor. The usual *Zork* rules apply generally, but here you can actually alter the attributes of your player before you begin, in a sort of RPG style. Unlike other Infocom games, Beyond displays a map which shows your immediate area.

Verdict 85%

Lurking Horror

A student at Great Underground Empire Tech, you have gone into college to finish an assignment. A snowstorm prevents you from leaving the building, and you are trapped in the school overnight. But are you alone? Well, the title would suggest not, and opening that trapdoor in the basement just might prove it...

This is an excellent, atmospheric game that will have you looking over your shoulder. There's an weird storyline and a comic-book feel.

Verdict 82%

The package as a whole

Before you rush out and buy the package, take a while to consider just what these games are about. There are no graphics, and so comparing them with recent graphical adventures is difficult. Some of these games stand up well even when compared to the fabulous *Monkey Island 2*; in the sense of comparing a good book to a good video.

If you're the type of person who prefers reading a novel to watching a film, and you have the next couple of years free, then buy this. It's not just a pack of games, it's a piece of history.

The Lost Treasures of Infocom
Infocom ■ £39.99

- **Comparing to *Monkey Island 2* is like comparing a good book with a video.**
- **Some games are dated, but most still grab you by the throat and pull you in.**
- **Large games which are generally packed with atmosphere and humour.**
- **Each game will take a long time to complete, and there are 20 of them!**
- **Youngsters could well get bored because of the lack of graphics.**

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD 90%

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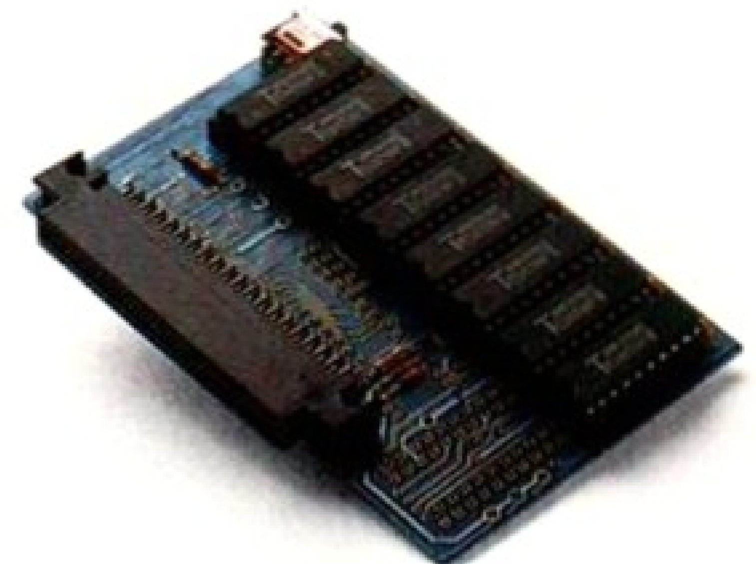
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STEP FORWARD

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SAMPLERS & SEQUENCERS EXPLAINED

SAMPLE: A sound that has been loaded into a computer and is represented by numbers (digital) rather than noises (analogue).

SAMPLER: Usually a small cartridge that allows you to take sounds from a microphone (with amplification), tape, CD etc and record (digitize) them into your computers memory. Once in the memory a sample (sound) can be changed using the sampling software.

SAMPLING SOFTWARE: Allows you to alter sounds that have been digitized by the SAMPLER. Normal functions with sampling software include loading and saving a sample disk, altering the sample by cutting, speeding up/down, fading in/out, joining to other samples and much much more.

SEQUENCER: Allows you to take samples and play them back in an order (sequence) that you determine. For example if you sampled a piano note, a sequencer would allow you to play that note back at different pitches and in a sequence you decide. Your one note loaded into a sequencer can become a complete piece of piano music.

MIDI INTERFACE: A small cartridge which plugs into your Amiga and allows a Midi instrument (usually a Keyboard) to communicate with the computer. If you already have a keyboard then you need to check that it has a Midi Port on it for it to work with a computer.

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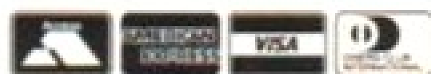
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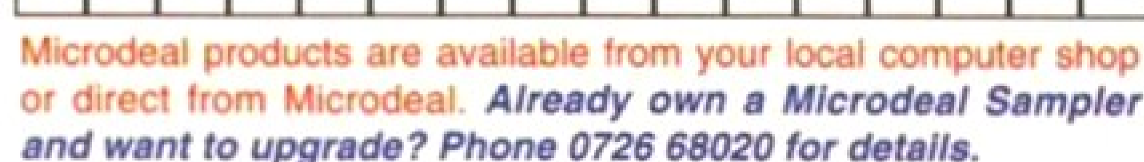
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We started off with one competition prize but due to the *Zool* – like momentum built up in the process, we ended up with SIX.

What to do? Make six people reasonably happy? Or make one person incredibly, over-the-top amusedly ecstatic? The answer was clear... over-turn this 'caring Nineties' schmaltz for a moment, and satisfy the greediest Amiga-user of the month. But, like a government with finances, we changed our minds at the last moment and persuaded Gremlin to give 10 lucky readers a chance to win a copy of *Zool* itself. So that's 11 chances to win!

So, all we want you to do is to send in six correct answers, on the back of a sealed envelope or a postcard, to the six correct questions we will be asking lower down.

And what do you get to win?

Well, Gremlin have quite happily matched six of the *Zool* levels to six wunnerful prizes.

Sweet World
This gives you a year's supply of Chuppa Chup cult-lollies. ("I always buy them when I can find them! But I can never find them," comments Art-Ed Marcus deliciously.)

Music World
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Toy World
The Mega-Super water pistol ("Hold on! This is a stick up! Move and the strange water-hating infant gets it in the head!" is often the scream heard to come from Neil-Reviews-Jackson.)

Fruit World
A massive, bumper, basket of fruit. ("Useful protection against scurvy and for throwing at MPs," beams Ed Asst Clare.)

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And now for the hard bit... no matter how greedy you are, you still have to get all six right

1) What were Snickers previously known as?

2) What is the size of a standard Compact Disc (diameter that is)?

3) Where is Legoland?

4) Where do the words 'Korova' and 'Droog' come from?

5) What tool do you need to turn off the waterfall in Monkey Island?

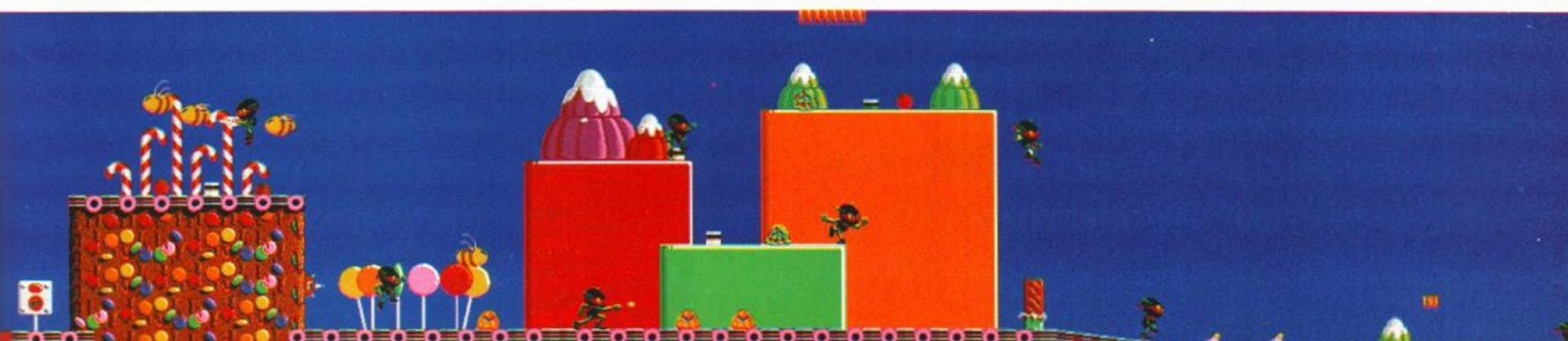
6) What sport is Alton Bird associated with?



"Err, toolkit, cuddly toy, lollies, Discman, waterpistol, cuddly toy, fruit hamper, cuddly tool." Won't you do well!

Once you're happy that, by rights. you should be the winner, you should send your answers to:
A bucket of fruit and a ninja,
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Entries to be in by 13 November

The rules
1) Employees and relatives of employees and relative employees of Future Publishing, Gremlin and Bristol City FC (because they're higher in the league than Rovers) are not allowed to enter.
2) The editor's decision is final (I think) and no phone calls or letters, faxes, telexes, telegrams, personal calls, or other forms of communication will be entered into regarding this comp.
3) Get on with it..





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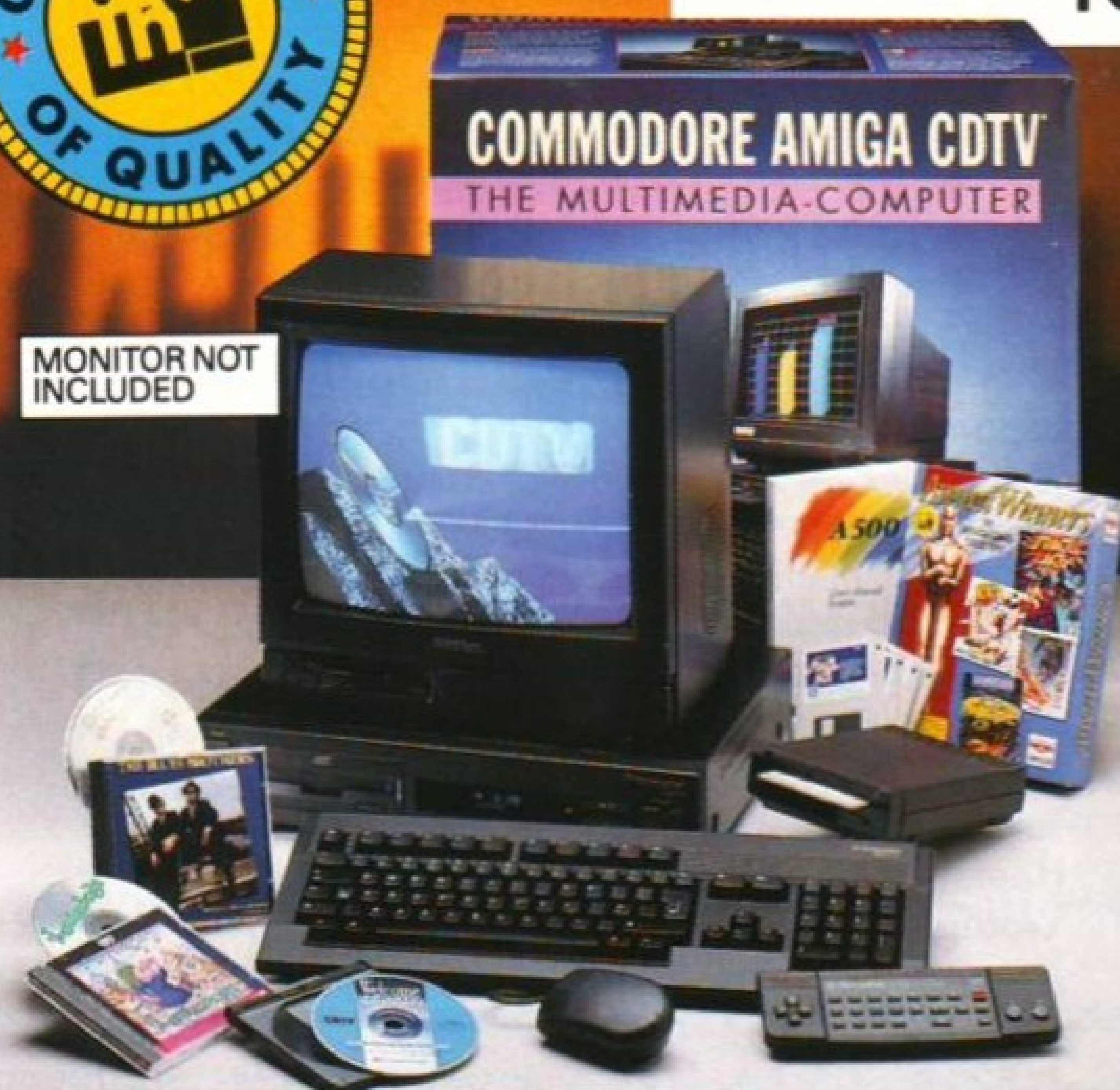
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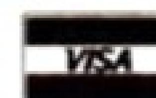
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Chartbusters

Need a tip for one of the latest games? Well, look no further. There's a slightly athletic feel to the panel, at least for all you armchair sporting types!



Espana '92

Can't get your athlete fit for the games? Try the following tip: put your man to train for three hours, then move the date to the 18th. Put the training back down to one hour, and your athlete should be trained to 95 per cent fitness!



Carl Lewis Challenge

You can use either the mouse or the joystick for getting your athlete to run, but using them both at the same time will make him run like the wind! Get your mate to waggle the joystick at the same time as you are waggling the mouse, and then you're laughing!

Here are some more hints and tips...

Don't bother training all your athletes – pick the most promising with starting statistics of >50%. By improving SPEED and POWER, leaving AGILITY and STAMINA at average levels, an athlete should perform well in all events. Either create one all-purpose athlete, or specialists for each event.

Best speed training is achieved by ACCELERATION, HOLLOW RUNNING and REPETITION RUNNING. Get these to F=70%, I=35% and T=35%. Leave all other stats at default levels.

Best power training is by ISOTONICS and ISOMETRICS. F=60%, I-30%, T=30%. Leave all other stats at default levels.

To train one athlete for all of the events, do three weeks SPEED and then two weeks POWER.

A general purpose gold medal contender should have the following final week stats: AGILITY=60%, SPEED=85%, POWER=75% and STAMINA=55%. (The default athletes in the arcade only game are set to 70, 70,70,70.)

But there's more...

OK, sports fans? Feeling fitter now? That should save you having to go to footie practice or circuit training this week (or month).

The tips don't stop there though. For all you Chartbusting types just turn to Page 124 for the full solution to the graphic adventure for those who just don't want to grow up: *Hook*. But before you get there have a look at Part 1 of the hints and maps to the massive, 25-level *Eye of the Beholder 2*, on Pages 122-3: it's the big one!

Game Busters

Are you stuck in a trap with no hope of survival? Up a certain creek without a certain implement? So who can you turn to luvvies? No, not Claire Rayner, but **Andy Nuttall** with this month's hints 'n' tips...

SO, YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN THE LITTLE PEOPLE?

Now here's a freaky puzzle game. *Gobliiins* is obviously very popular because loads of you have sent in pleas for help, so just type in the following codes to warp between levels...



Doesn't this scarecrow look like that bloke off *On the Buses*. What was his name... Blakey! And that famous catchphrase of his: "I'll get you Butler". So, for all those who've ever wondered what happened to old Blakey, here he is in his new vocation. Hasn't changed much has he? MIserable old beggar.

2	VQVQFDE	9	ICVGCGT	16	TCVQRPM
3	ICIGCAA	10	LQPCUJV	17	IQDNKQO
4	ECPQPCC	11	HNWVGKB	18	KKKPURE
5	FTWKFEN	12	FTQKVLE	19	NGOGKSP
6	HQWFTFW	13	DCPLQMH	20	NNGWTTO
7	DWNDGBW	14	EWDGPNL	21	LGWFGUS
8	JCJCJHM	15	TCNGTOV	22	TQNGFVC

The Cookie Monster(?)
Newcastle under Lyme

SLITHERY FUN WITH STEG THE SLUG

Here are the codes for the 10 levels in this fun budget game...



"Honestly, these Comic Relief red noses don't last very long do they?. I've only had mine for seven years and the colour's run out already."

2	RDNUHCCMGU	7	LECGLDTRHK
3	EDOUTIOCKO	8	NEDGFLDVRL
4	HDPFUVLCCM	9	OEFVHAGHLV
5	ODQMFUVLIC	10	PEGTTHIGLD
6	MEBHETPIAG		

Chris Hughes
Harrogate

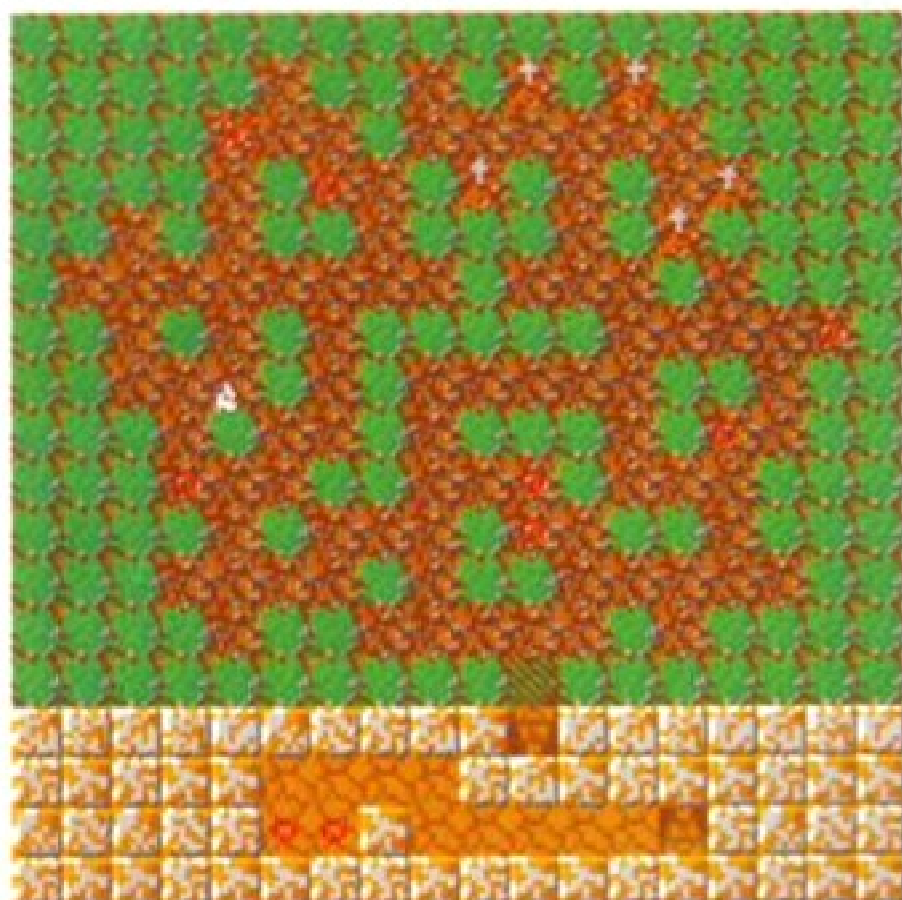
Eye of the Beholder 2

We've had lots of maps and hints for this game in the last couple of months, but these are without a doubt the best. It's a huge game with 25 levels, so you'll find Part 1 here, with Part 2 next month.

£50

Hints, maps and map graphics by Arvid Nilsson, Sweden

FOREST AREA



● The old woman in the forest is the bid who can lead you to the temple.

KEY

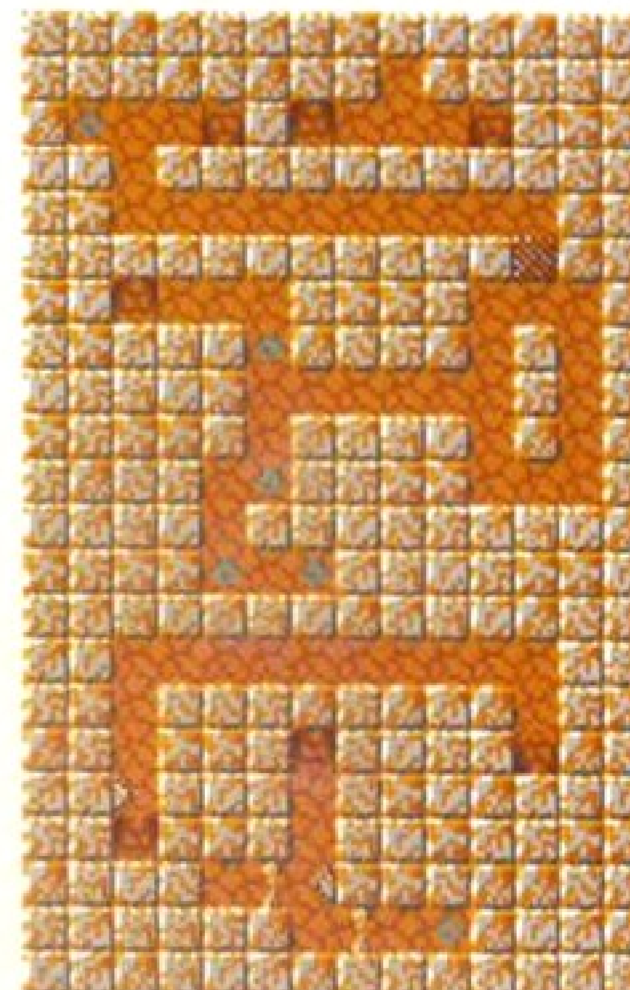
STAIRS UP	WALK-THROUGH
STAIRS DOWN	ILLUSIONARY OR MOVEABLE WALL
TREES	
WALL	GRAVE
GROUND	OBJECT
FLOOR	START

CATACOMB LEVEL 1



If you let Insal-the-Quick join your party, he will steal from you while you rest.

CATACOMB LEVEL 2



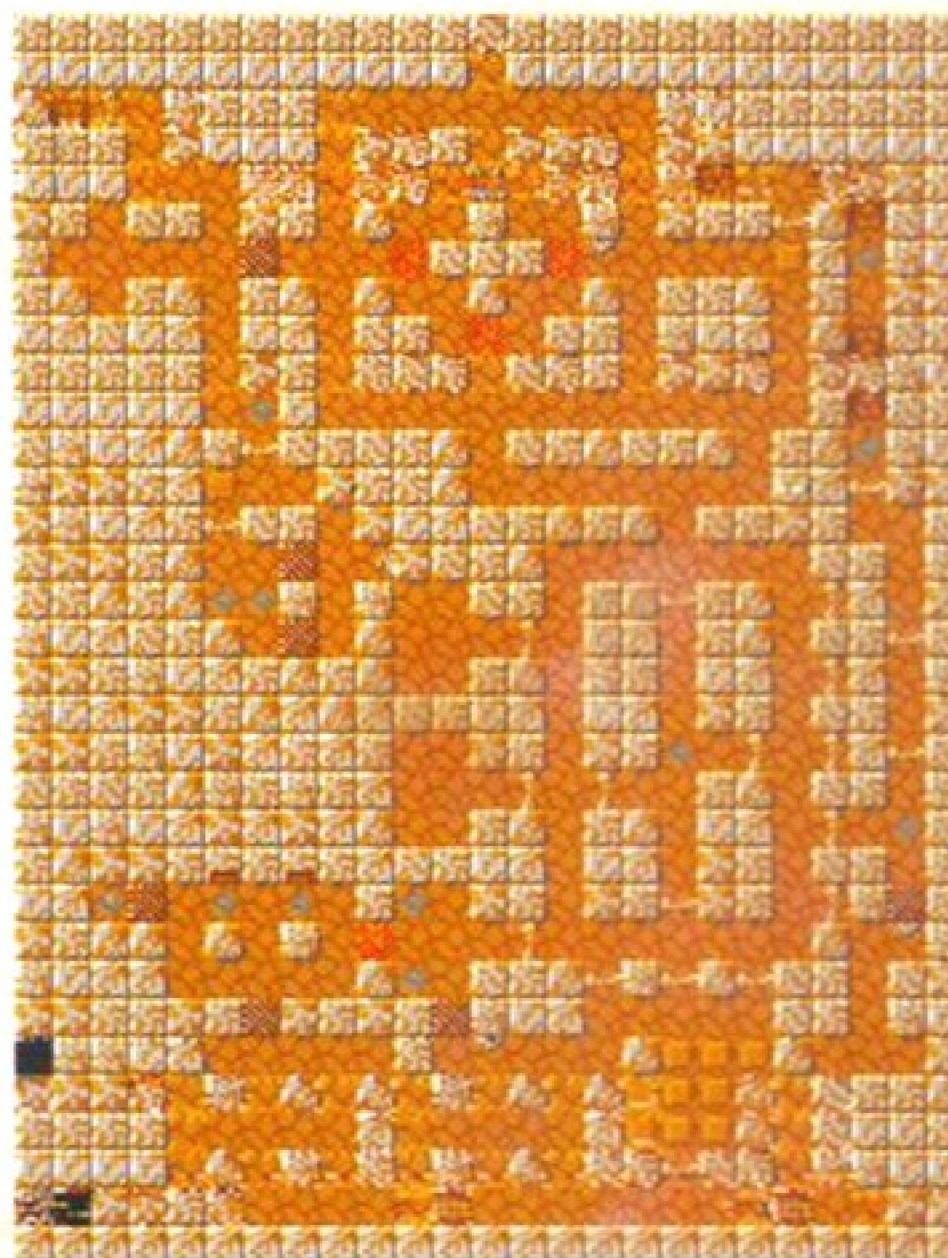
● If you fall down a pit in catacomb level 1 and you end up imprisoned, throw something through the bars so that it hits the button to the east. The door will then open. A keyhole nearby can only be opened with a lock pick.

● You come back to the north of this level when you complete catacomb levels four and five.

CATACOMB LEVEL 5



● This is the giant-ant lair – they will come out of the holes to the west. There is a lot of treasure to be found on this level. Make sure you get the horn from the south before you go back up the stairs.



CATACOMB LEVEL 3

● There are two Non-Player Characters (NPCs) who may join your party at this level. You will find a complete set of elf bones in the prison block which is to the south of this level.

● To the north is a big room with a whole legion of skeletal lords. Save before you enter, because the skeletons may kill your party.

● To exit this level you will need two Dark Moon keys. The wall in front of the stairs to catacomb level four can be hacked away. You can't rest on level four and five, so you should memorise your spells and rest before you enter. You may find some healing potions, spells and scrolls rather useful when you're on level four.

CATACOMB LEVEL 4

● When you enter this level, a door is closed behind you. To get back to the temple, you must find another way out.

● In the room with nine pressure plates, an object must be placed on the middle one and in the corner plates, like an X (or a five on a die).

● If you desperately need to rest, you should find the stone gem and use it on the teleporter. It will take you to Temple level two, where you can rest. Once you have though, you should teleport back to the catacomb. Stairs to the north west lead down to catacomb level five.

● You need many keys to get back up. But, make sure you've got all four horns before you do.

KEY

WALL	SHELF
FLOOR	PRESSURE PLATE
ILLUSIONARY OR MOVEABLE WALL	LEVER
	BUTTON
STAIRS UP	OBJECT
STAIRS DOWN	BED
TELEPORTER	EMPTY WATER BASIN
DOORS	
PLAQUE	PIT
NICHE	BARREL

TEMPLE LEVEL 1

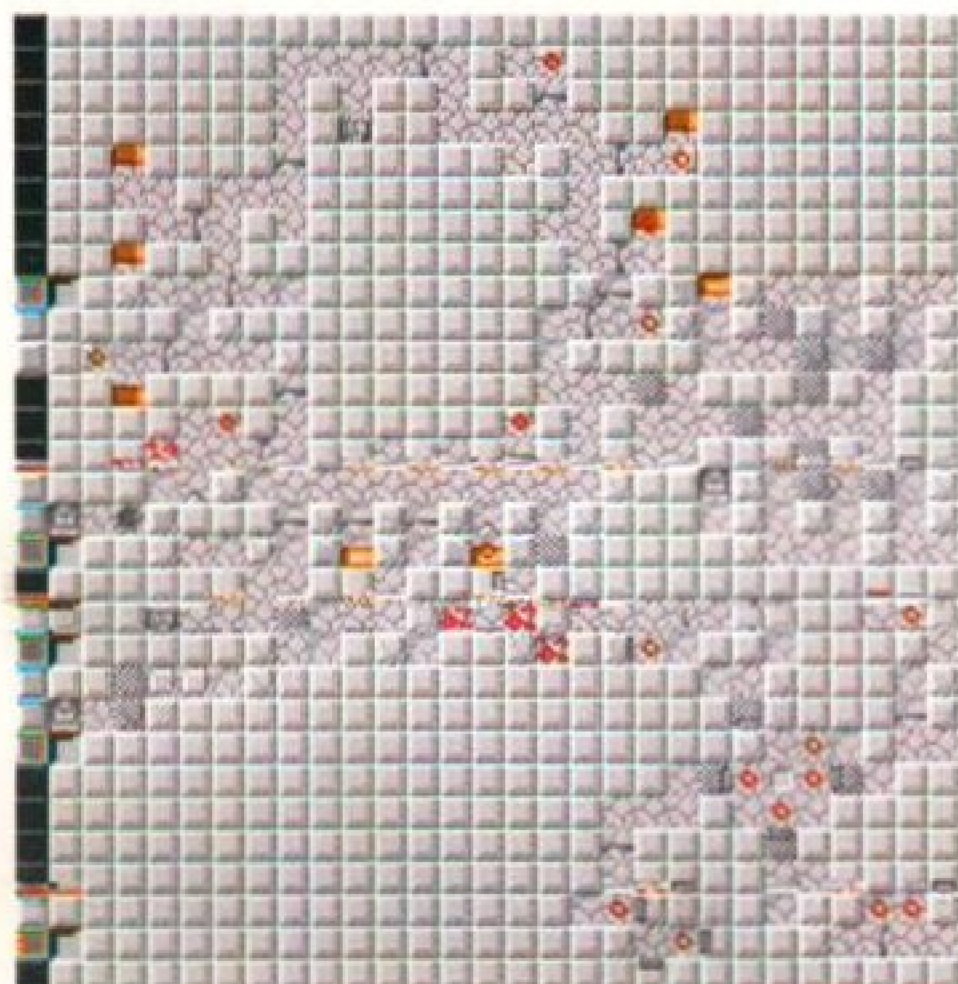


● To destroy the carving of the four winds you need the four horns. They can be found in the catacomb levels one, three, four and five. Stand in front of the carving and use all of the four horns in any order (click on them with right mouse button).
● The teleporters lead to the resurrection rooms, this is where you can bring dead party members or NPCs back to life.

KEY (ALSO SILVER TOWER)

- WALL
- FLOOR
- ILLUSIONARY OR MOVEABLE WALL
- STAIRS UP
- STAIRS DOWN
- TELEPORTER
- DOORS
- PLAQUE
- NICHE
- SHELF
- PRESSURE PLATE
- LEVER
- OBJECT
- BED
- HOLY WATER BASIN
- PIT
- RESURRECTION
- BARREL
- MANTIS EGG
- LIGHT PAD

TEMPLE LEVEL 2



● Search everything!
● A key can be found in a bed.
● Many locks can only be opened by a thief.
● To get to the Azure Tower up the eastern stairs you need the mark of Darkmoon and the crystal hammer, both of which you'll get at Silver tower level four.
● To get to the Crimson tower up the western stairs, you must get the Crimson key (found at Azure tower level 2) and three pieces of Talon (found at the Azure tower levels).
● When in the Gem room, smashing one of the statuettes will reveal a button – if you push, it should take you in to the western teleporter. In the room that lies beyond that you can find three gems, a key and a pressure plate.

Take the key and put the three gems into any alcove, and the corresponding wall will disappear. You can now enter and get the treasure, and a Tropelet (teleporT) seed. This may be placed on the pressure plate, creating a teleporter which will take you back to the Gem room.
● WARNING: If you enter the eastern section, the wall will close behind you, and you will be trapped.

SILVER TOWER LEVEL 1

● In front of the stairs are lightpads, which the party must walk over. On the map, are some pads blinking on and off. When a lightpad is off, you can enter it without taking damage. Try not to step on the lit ones.
● You are supposed to get to the other side by following the blinking pads (before you enter the blinking lightpads, save the game). When you get there, the walls disappear, and Mantis warriors attack you. Keep on the pads and quickly kill all the creatures, then step off the pads.
● The lever will turn the blinking lightpads off, along with a few of the lit ones.
● In the niche by the plaque that reads 'What can be trusted?' any item inserted will turn into the last item inserted. Be sure to get the cursed sword called 'Hunger' in this room, as it will be needed later. In the hall with the lever, the lock for the north door can be picked open.
● All mantis eggs can be cut open, revealing young warriors. Feed the magic mouth with three femurs to get a bone key. In the room with eight mantis eggs, take the left eye, replace it, and the wall disappears. Take the mantis idol.

SILVER TOWER LEVEL 2

● When you get here you will find there are loads of giant wasps flying around – they both paralyse and poison you, so beware or you'll get stung.
● Faith is the key
● In the room with four pits the pressure plate resets the levers and the pits.

You must pull down the levers in this order: Northwest, Southwest, Southeast. Now go down the corridor to the south and press the button, then go back up again and pull the Northeastern lever.
● When you meet the spirit again, you should NOT take the left teleporter, you should enter the right (the one that "leads to certain death") – it will teleport you to the stairs to the southeast.

SILVER TOWER LEVEL 3

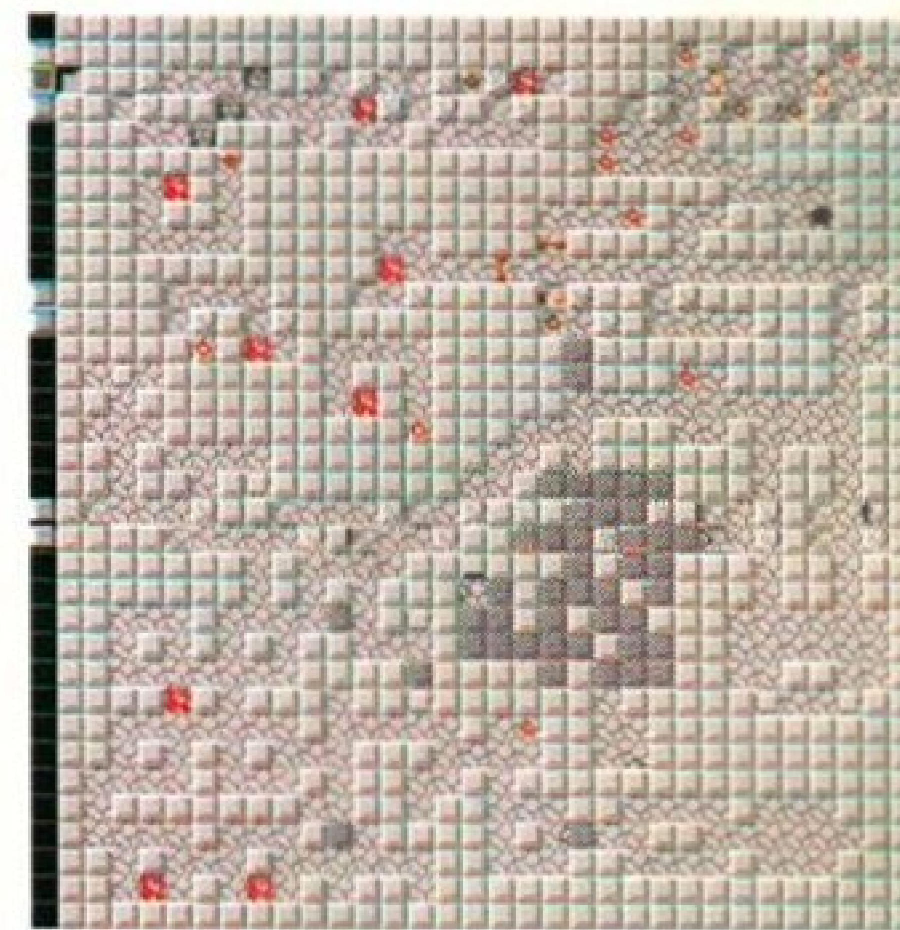


● When you meet another spirit, you should take the right door.
● The niche at the plaque which says 'Greed may be your downfall. Give what you need not.' any item inserted turns into a rock (It's not a great idea to turn something you need into a rock).
● It's not wise to enter the room with the trap. If you want to go in there save the game first. Feed the following items to the magic mouths, so that they'll sing and open the door to level four:

1 Rotten food
2 Five rocks
3 Mantis idol (this mouth also opens the door to the red gem)
4 Red gem
5 Cursed 'Hunger" or Cursed "Leech"
6 A potion
7 Scroll or parchment

● One of the mouths will not have a function right now, but later, if you enter this level again, it will open the door that Dran closed.

SILVER TOWER LEVEL 4



● Step into the teleporter. This will take you to a random place: the beginning, the room with four keyholes in or a room with a shelf and a key. Teleport until you have all four keys, then teleport to the room with the keyholes and insert the keys into the keyholes. The door will then open.
● Watch out for Beholders. There are also will o' wisps which can be very hard to hit. The Prayer 'Haste and protection from evil 10' helps hit them.
● You should enter the illusionary wall labyrinth, and get to the southern room with the button.
● A Beholder is stuck in a hole on the ceiling. Don't kill him immediately (otherwise he will cause trouble later). He will then attack, so kill him, push the button and you'll get sucked up the hole. Get the crystal hammer while up there!
● The exit is at the end of the 'Test of Vision', in the southeast corner. When you enter the secret passage the spirit appears and summons two beholders. When you've killed them put your hand on the pedestal to receive the mark of Darkmoon and be teleported back to the temple.

Hook

Following on from last month's solution to the brilliant Monkey Island 2, we now move on to yet another pirate adventure, the film licence Hook. Herein lies the full solution...



As you climb the tree and look down, Behold! The fabled Neverland in front of your very eyes.

Your first task in the game is to get yourself a pirate outfit, otherwise you won't be able to blend in with the locals and get on to Hook's ship to talk to him. Seeing as you have no money, you must steal the items of clothing that you need... tut, tut (don't do this in real life kids).

At the beginning of the game you are in Pirate Square. Go left from here, pick up the anchor and the washing pole, then go right to Deadman's Pier. Pick up the rope and use it with the anchor, then go into the Crossed Swords pub and get the two mugs from the tables. Go into the Bait and Tackle bar and pick up the third mug, then go out of the door at the top of the stairs.

Wait until the pirate is walking across the square, then use the anchor on the top of the clock. If you time this correctly you should swing across to Mrs Smeedle's front door, grabbing the pirate's hat at the same time (you may need to do this several times until you get it right). Knock on Mrs Smeedle's door, and when she replies use the anchor again to swing back. Now go back down to the square, go left and use the pole on the pirate jacket. Examine the jacket, and you will find a coin.



As Chop pulls your teeth out, you realise – with despair – this is the funny bit of the game...

Go right to Mugger's Alley, and see Dr. Chop to get a couple of teeth pulled out – he will give you two coins in return. Take the roller blind and go to the Jolliest Roger pub, where you should give the three mugs and coins to the barman. He will give you three mugs of cocoa, which you should then give to the man in the blue hat who will fall asleep, enabling you to remove his trousers (quite why the barman doesn't kick you out right there and then I don't know).

Right, now you have all three pieces of uniform, go back to the washing line and use the roller-blind, enabling you to put the outfit on in private.



"What's this, a fancy dress party or what? I look ridiculous! But then I suppose this is *Hook*, so maybe it's quite apt."

Go to Good Form pier and on to Hook's ship, then walk right and take some money out of the three pots. Go back to the town, buy the magnet from the tailor's shop, then go to the beach and use the magnet on the 'X' which will uncover a clock. Go back to Hook's ship, and walk towards the pirates. After a conversation with Hook, you will be made to walk the gangplank, and will subsequently find yourself on the seabed.

Use the pole on the pulley to get it working, then look at the shiny clam to find a conch shell. Use the clam to get out of the water, then walk right along the tree branch. To get through the forest, follow these directions: North, East, North, West, North, East and then East again.



Right. Here I am, standing on the seabed. Wait a mo, how am I breathing? Aaargh! Blub! etc.

You should now walk into a rope trap, which reveals the lost boys' hideout. Walk left into the workshop and get the elastic, then go left to the jogging area where you can use the weights to get into shape. Go left to the Avenger, get the net and examine it to find a piece of string. Go right twice to get to the Four Seasons, then get the dead branch and the flower. Scare the chicken by blowing the conch shell at it, then pick up the eggs. Give the eggs to the boy in the workshop, and take the suction arrow.

Go right twice to the pond, talk to Tinkerbell, and give her the flower. In return she will give you a thimble. Get the branch from the tree to the right, then use it with the string to make a bow. Go back to the workshop and use the bow on the panpipes, then pick them up and go to the slingshot.



"You found this bit of elastic and somebody had strapped two rings to the trees? Yeah..."

Use the elastic to fix the slingshot, then go up and right to the clifftop and use yourself with the end of the fence (to practice how to fly). Do this several times, then ask Thudbutt about his happy thoughts, and he will give you some marbles. Go back and insult Rufio by saying "Oh, Rufio!" (strong words indeed), which will enable you to use your imagination and throw some imaginary food at him. The table will now be covered with food.

Go down to the round pond, and walk towards the tree. This will take you to the island. Examine the log-bed, fireplace and chair, then talk to Tinkerbell. You will be shown a movie-like story, Rufio will give you a sword, and then you will fly off towards Hook himself.

Now you are very close to the end of the adventure, and all you need to do to kill Hook is talk him to death – we're leaving this one to you, because it's reasonably easy!

Sent in by Daren Mitchell
Bognor Regis

Buz
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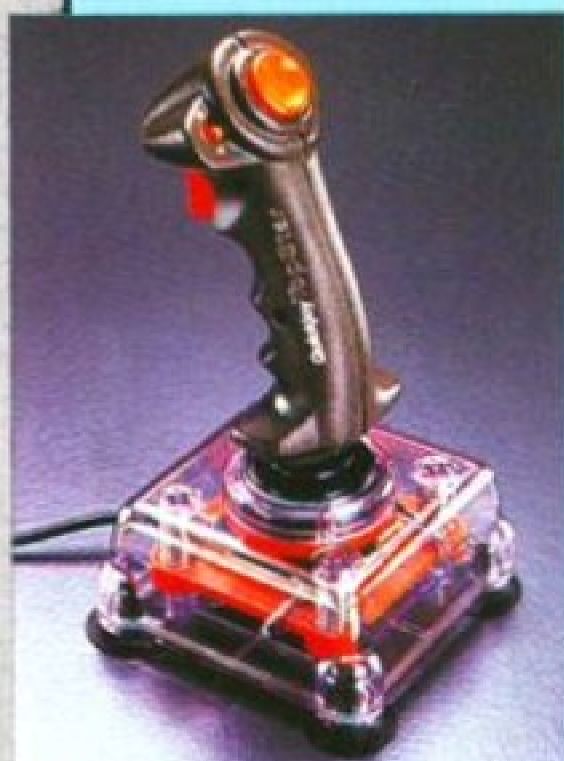
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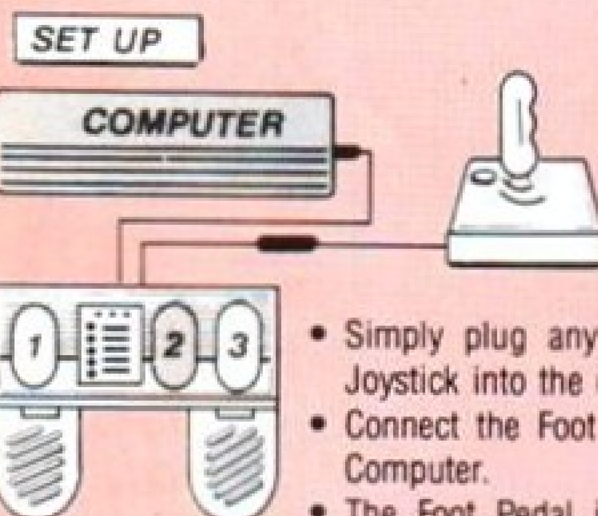
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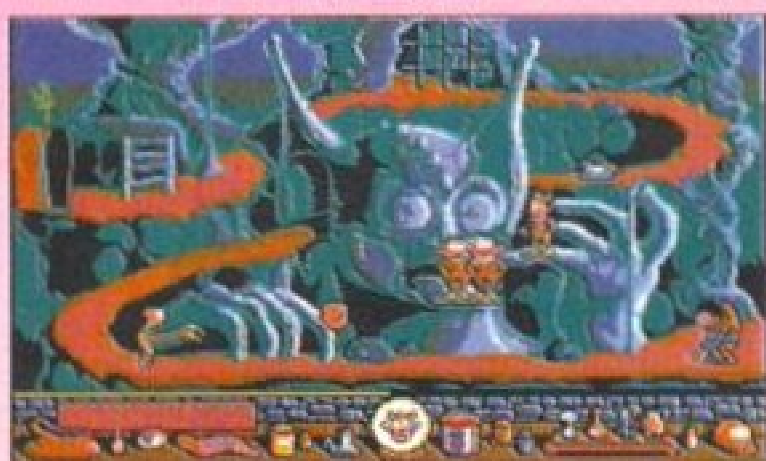
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Helping Hand

Now come on. What are you reading this bit for? You should know what Helping Hand is by now. It's that page dedicated to helping people with their problems... (on computer games, of course.) Here goes...

WINE, WOMEN AND WIZARDS



The short-sighted hunchback is just about to buy it because the cow-aaardly Gobliiins have gone for a wash...

I have a problem with the *Gobliiins*. On level 13, I can't get to the bottle next to the wizard because the horn is in the way.

Neil Willan
Derby

£25 **This is one of the trickiest levels, but thanks to Stephen Murray of Flint it's not impossible. After you've cracked the egg, magic it to make the wings grow. The egg will pick Ignatius up and drop him on the right of the screen. Magic the horn on the floor to remove it, then pick up the elixir and use it.**

When Oups is invisible, walk past the horn to the right of the screen. Pick up the carrot and use it by the rabbit hole. Bring Oups to the edge of the wall by the horn, then magic the rabbit who will jump on the wall and transform into a naked woman. When the Wiz is looking at her, move Asgard to near the rabbit hole as well, and you will be able to pass GO.

Stop monkeying around!

Good grief! It seems that there has been a resurgence of interest in the original Monkey Island *in the past couple of months, probably due to the popularity of the sequel. Well, I'll answer some questions, after all, we did publish a full solution way back in* Amiga Format *24 and 25.*

Anyway, here are the queries...

I need help! I can't get past the deadly piranha poodles on Melee Island. I've tried giving them the hunk of meat but nothing happens.

Timothy Robinson
Newcastle upon Tyne

Ah, but it's not the meat that matters, it's what you do with it that counts. Remember those yellow plants you saw while walking through the forest? Try using a yellow petal on the meat and then give it to the poodles. Condiments, who needs 'em?

Help! I'm desperate! I've got to Monkey Island, but the natives won't give me a navigational tool. What can I do?

Paul Johnson
Preston

Easy. Give the natives the wimpy little idol, then go into the hut on the left. Get the banana picker, then go back outside and head out of the village. Give the banana picker to Herman, and he will give you the monkey-head key.

Paddle around the beach just next to the headland, and walk to the gigantic monkey-head in the clearing. Use the key on the gigantic monkey ear, then get into the boat again and paddle back up to the village. You should now find that the natives are friendly, so tell them you're looking for somebody who's dead.

They will tell you about their magic potion, and you should then tell them that you're going to kick LeChuck out. Get them to tell you about the head of the navigator, then give them the leaflet – you will then get the object of your desire...

Remember, all these tips – and loads more – (including The Simpsons*) are available in the* Screenplay 2 *book by Maff Evans. See Page 128 for details.*

Double damage

On level two under Treihadwyl in the game *Legend*, there is a room containing six damage symbols on the floor. Try as I might, I can't get past the expanse of water in front of the door. Help!

D Honey
Witney

What you must do is cast the spell 'missile damage damage' on the tile to the south west. You will then be able to cross.



"Now look here. You had better come over here and cook these sausages right this minute, young man, or there'll be hell to pay."

In *Legend*, I'm stuck at Fagranc level one in a room with two pressure pads, one green and one blue. Trouble is, I can't open the chest without getting teleported away! Can you give me a hint?

Nick Jepson
Rotherham

We certainly can! Go right to the door in the North, then turn around so that you're north of the chest and facing it. Now click on 'take', then click on your own feet. Your character should then examine his square, and when he finds it empty he will open the chest. Voilà! Thanks to Tag for the tips.

Fish! Wibble.

I'm stuck! The arcade adventure *Exile* has had me stumped for ages. I can get quite far in the game, but when it comes to the part with the 'Happy fish' and some acid drops I can't get past the clams! Can you or a reader help me?

Alex Churchill
Throop

I'm afraid we can't. Can anyone out there?



Oh no. Jetman's been on the Happy Fish again...

And finally...

I always buy your brilliant magazine! I feel it is the best on the market. That's why I have sent you my own personal A-Z of cheats. Since there are 218 of them, does that mean that I get £50 per cheat (which equals £10,900)?

James Jagger
Lincoln

Nope.

WANTED!

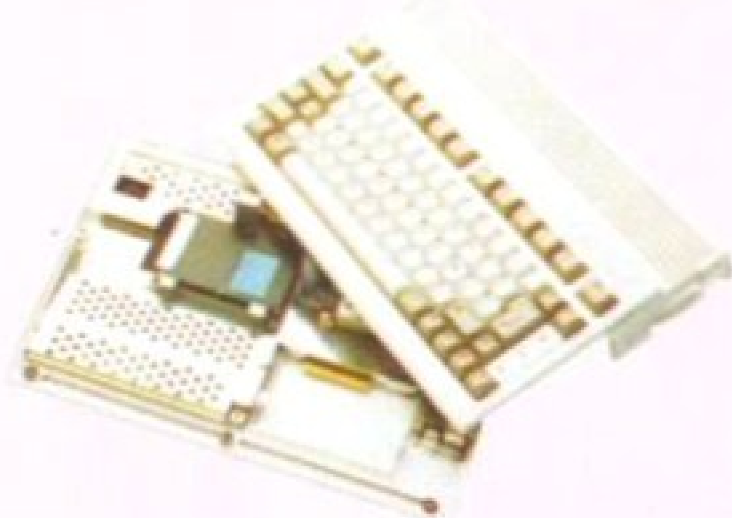
More hints, tips and cheats than you can shake a stick at! Send them in to GameBusters, and you could win up to 50 quid! Stuck on a game? Send your question in to Helping Hand and we'll do our best to see you right!

Remember though, we don't print Action Replay cheats, and we don't give personal replies. See ya later!

If you're stuck on a particular game, or have a solution to a letter printed in the magazine, then write it down and send it in to us at HELPING HAND *Amiga Format*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

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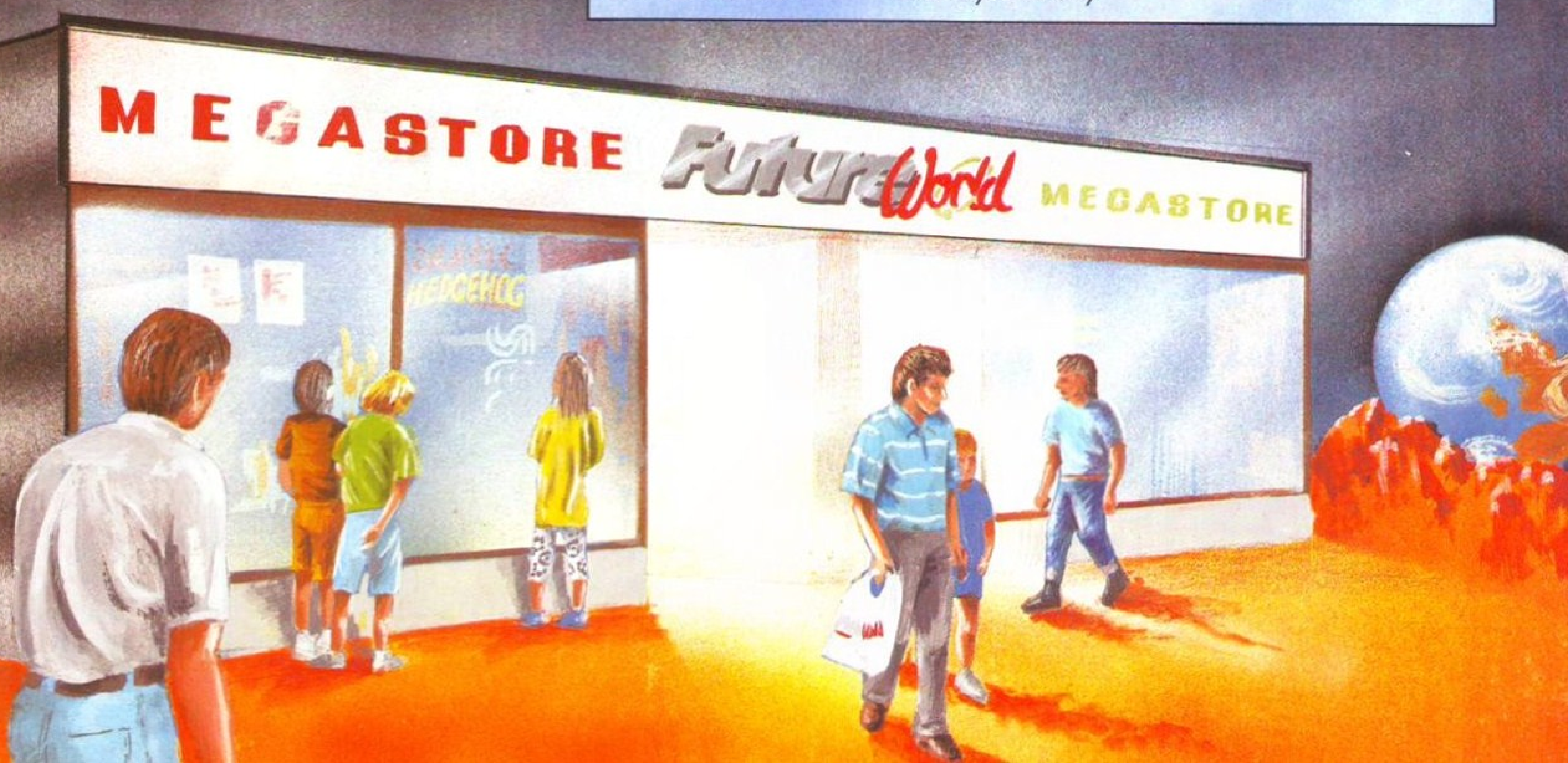
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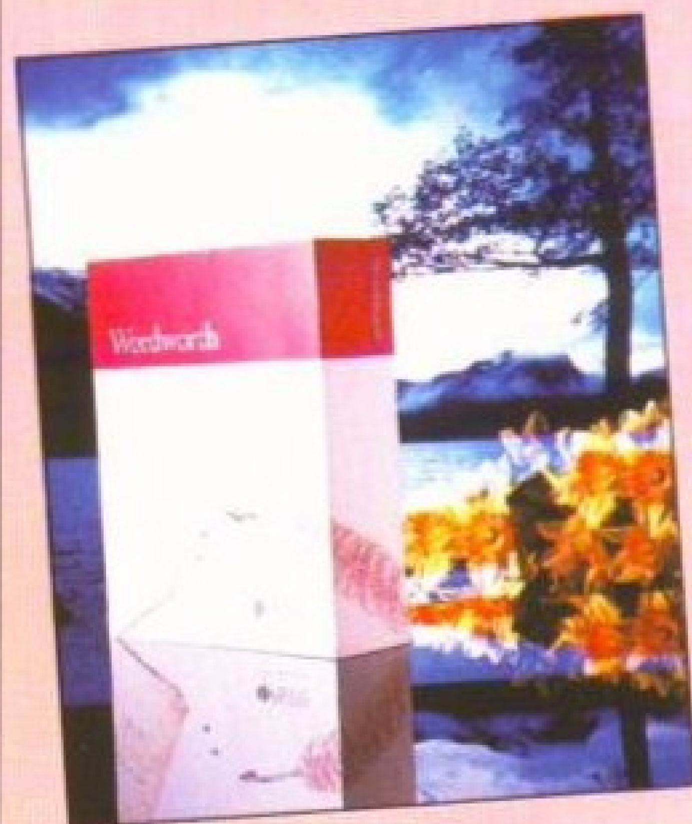
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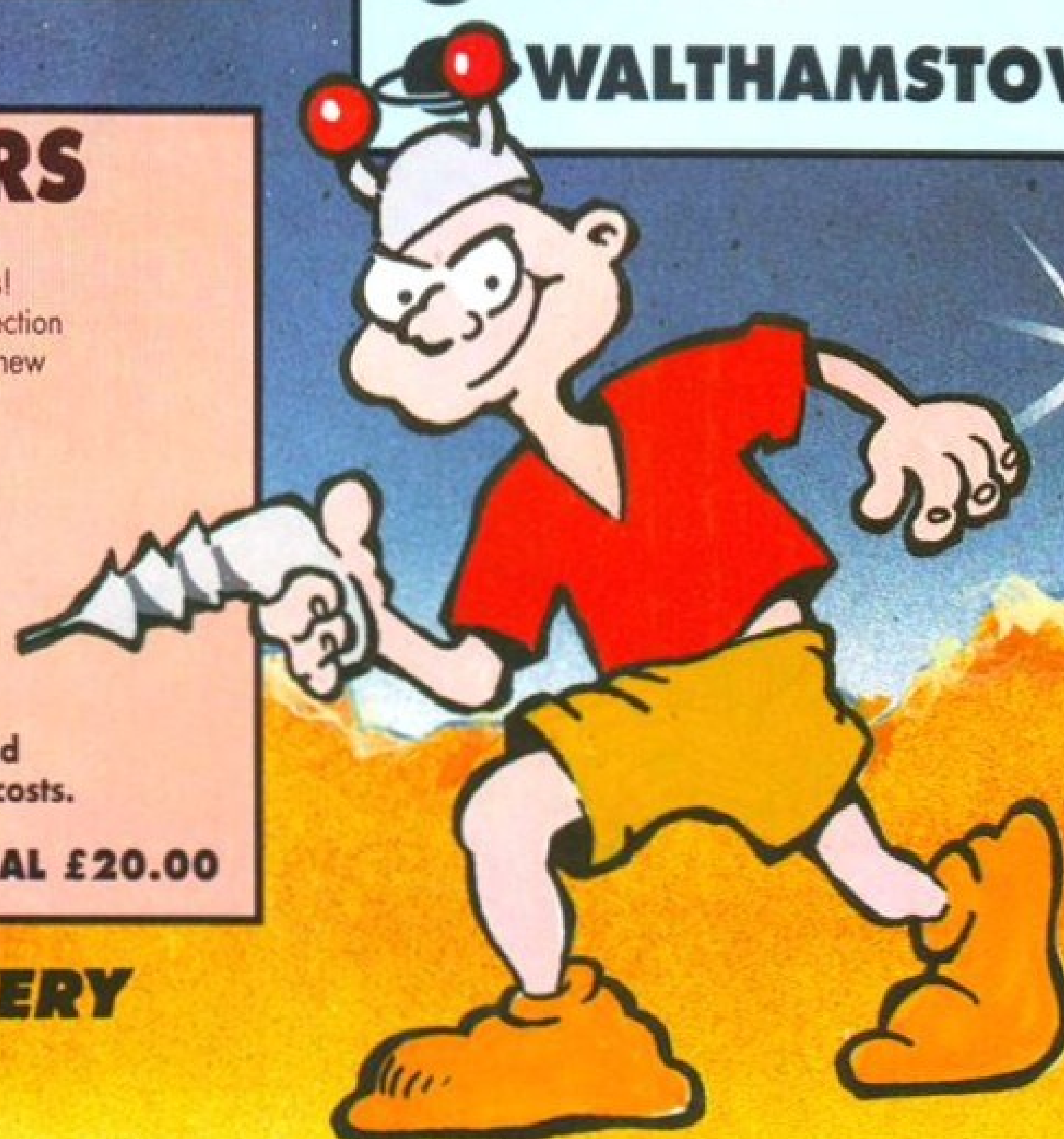
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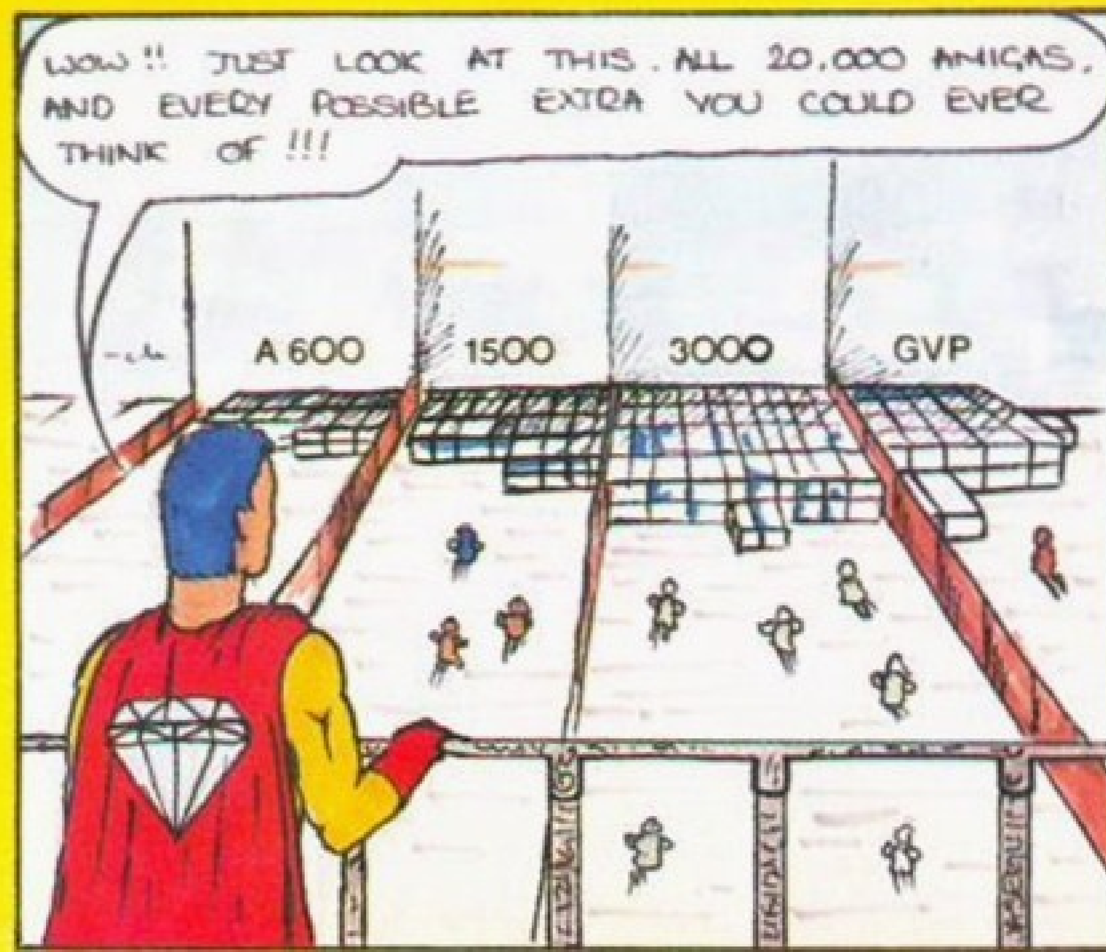
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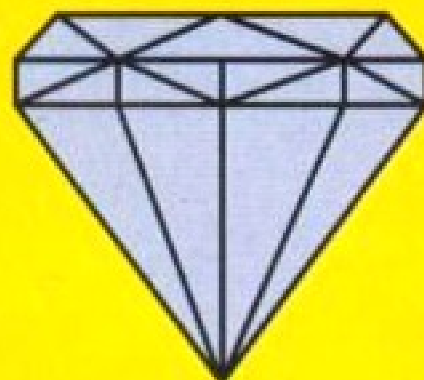






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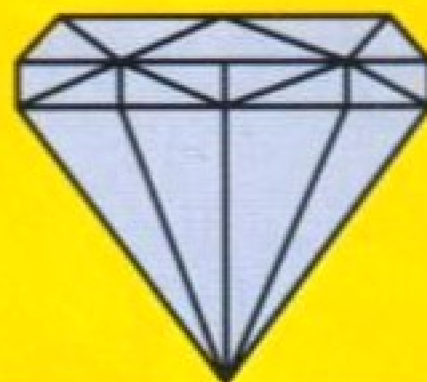






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Your Turn! Part 2

Bullfrog's coding methods revolve around making life as easy as possible, so giving more time to pose in rather ridiculous positions for press photographers. Or not, as the case may be.

How to program your own games in assembler

Part 2 of a continuing series which aims to teach you how to program like the pros. Bullfrog coder **Scott Johnston** delves into the mysterious world of player control, and how to tweak a sprite'.0's movement to give an impression of inertia and momentum. So if you want to avoid stilted, lifeless characters, read on...

Welcome back. If you followed last month's article, well done. If not go back and do so. This month we're going to tie the movement of our sprite to the joystick. If you run Demo you will find the man now runs left and right with momentum. The exit key has changed to Q because when Escape was pressed you got the repeat of your last input. Does the program work? Great.

Now let's make him run up and down the screen as well. If you look inside Move.s you will notice two new things. At the top of the file is a small list of equates. These control the graphics for our man and the speed he accelerates and moves. Try changing the two equates for the speeds. The man should move differently depending on the numbers you put in. If you change the animation equates the man could start doing strange things. Another example of equates is in Draw.s on the two asr.w lines, with the word FOUR. This is easier to understand than placing a 2 on the line.

Continued overleaf

APOLOGIES

Our sincere apologies for the lack of an IFF to binary convertor program on this month's Coverdisk. This was entirely due to lack of space on the disk, and we apologise to all the coders straining at the leash to put their own graphics into the demo. Never mind, you've got another month to make them look even better than they are now!

Anyway back to Move.s. After this we have the subroutine _move_all. Last month we placed all our code here, but now we will place our code into new subroutines which _move_allcalls. Our man now has 5 variables. These are as follows:

`man_x` (whereabouts he is horizontally on the screen.)

`man_y` (whereabouts he is vertically on the screen.)

`man_vx` (the speed and direction in which he is travelling horizontally.)

`man_vy` (the speed and direction in which he is travelling vertically.)

`man_frame` (The current frame of animation that is displayed.)

Inside the first of our new routines _man_x is the code to read the joystick, and move the man left and right. Study this. Now if you copy this and place it into _man_y, change the variable names to their Y counterparts and then change the following lines:

`cmp.w #300*4,d1` to `cmp.w #176*4,d1`
`move.w #300*4,d1` to `move.w #176*4,d1`

and place an asr.w #FOUR,d1 into draw.s at line 14. Now you should have momentum on the Y axis. Try it. Did it work? If not go back and study the code again. You probably made a small mistake somewhere along the line.

Right, now change the names of the dot labels (those that start with '.') to what they are actually doing. Good, now did you under-stand that code? If so see if you can change it so that instead of the man stopping when he reaches the edge of the screen, make him bounce off. Basically you change four commands from a Move.w to a Neg.w. If you did not understand it, don't worry because I will explain now precisely what it is doing.

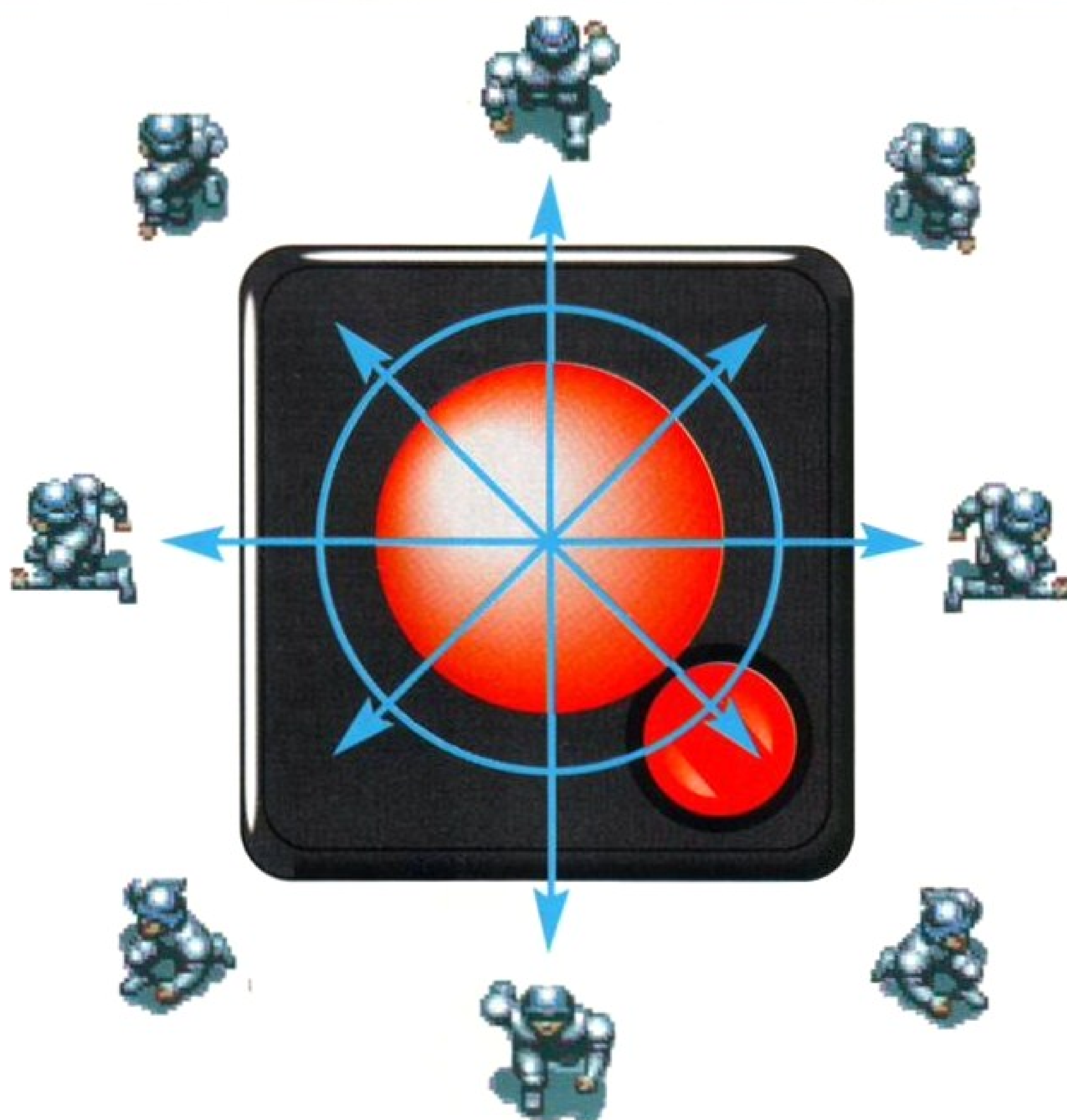
To start with we pick up the velocity of the man, and the direction in which the joystick is being moved. The joystick will be a 1 if the joystick is going right, 0 if it not moving, and -1 if it is going left. We then multiply the joystick direction by the acceleration and add it to our current velocity.

Now the velocity needs to be checked to make sure that we are not going faster than we want in either direction. First start off by checking in the right-hand direction, and if it is going too fast then scale it down to the minimum speed. Then check the other side and scale it down if need be. OK that's the velocity just about done. We now get our current x position and add the velocity to it. Check the new x position with the left-hand side of the screen, and if we have gone off then move us back on to the screen and stop the velocity.

Test the other side of the screen, and again stop the velocity and move it back on if it has gone off screen. The final piece of code we have in this routine is the slow down. This checks to see if we are moving the joystick, if we are then we don't want to slow the man down. After this try and find out in which direction you are moving. If you're going left we want to increase our velocity to slow it down. Sounds strange but the maximum left speed is in fact –16, or whatever you change MAX_SPEED to. If you are going right you want to decrease our speed. The reason for subtracting 2 and then adding a 1 to the velocity is so that you don't have to branch past the going-left section. Follow that OK?

Now wade through the code in _man_anim and see if you can work out what is going on.

Continued on Page 142



Making game sprites move is more than just working out where they are and finding the right frame. To behave naturally, a sprite has to obey natural laws like gravity, inertia and movement. In addition, the design of a sprite's environment (the *Speedball* pitch is one example) also helps to shape how a character moves. You can break these guidelines – many programmers don't even consider them. But games which do use them tend to be more playable, more fun and more challenging.

That's the way you do it!

Block Programming

House | Aliens | Collide | Disk | Keyboard | Main | Move | Draw | Screen Setup | Blitter | Sound | Music | Joystick | Score

Any bug means the whole file must be loaded

This is the block approach, where all code is in one massive block. Difficult to debug and a pain when it comes to going to one end or other of the file; avoid this approach if you want to stay sane!

Module Programming

House | Aliens | Collide | Disk | Keyboard | Main | Move | Draw | Screen Setup | Blitter | Sound | Music | Joystick | Score

All bugs are localized. Finding them is easier.

Modular programming, where code is split into smaller blocks with one controller file at the beginning is easier to debug, easier to look through and is generally quicker to work with.

Some people last issue were confused as to how you go about using the Bullfrog development system. Well the idea is that the code is controlled by one file, which loads in all the others. This control file is called Demo.s. So as you make changes to other files, you must save them. Then load and assemble Demo.s to see the results.

This system has a lot of advantages. Programmers build up a collection of small programs and odd utilities which they use time and again. There's no point keeping them all in the same file though. You might only use one of these routines, and all the others are stuck to it, wasting memory and disk space.

Hence the need to split programs up into many small files. Once assembled, all the code will be in one block anyway. This approach to splitting up programs into small chunks is known as modular programming. Although assembler is not well suited to this approach in some ways, it still makes sense to keep routines in separate files.

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NEW COMMANDS

`Neg.w    d0.`

This reverses all the bits in d0. This is a great help when you want to change the signs of numbers. For example 5 becomes –5, and –9 will become 9.



***Zool* is one of the best examples of movement control tweaked to perfection. The main character's behaviour has been developed extremely well.**



Myth is one of many games where the control leaves a lot to be desired. The main character moves, but too much time is spent moving. More speed!

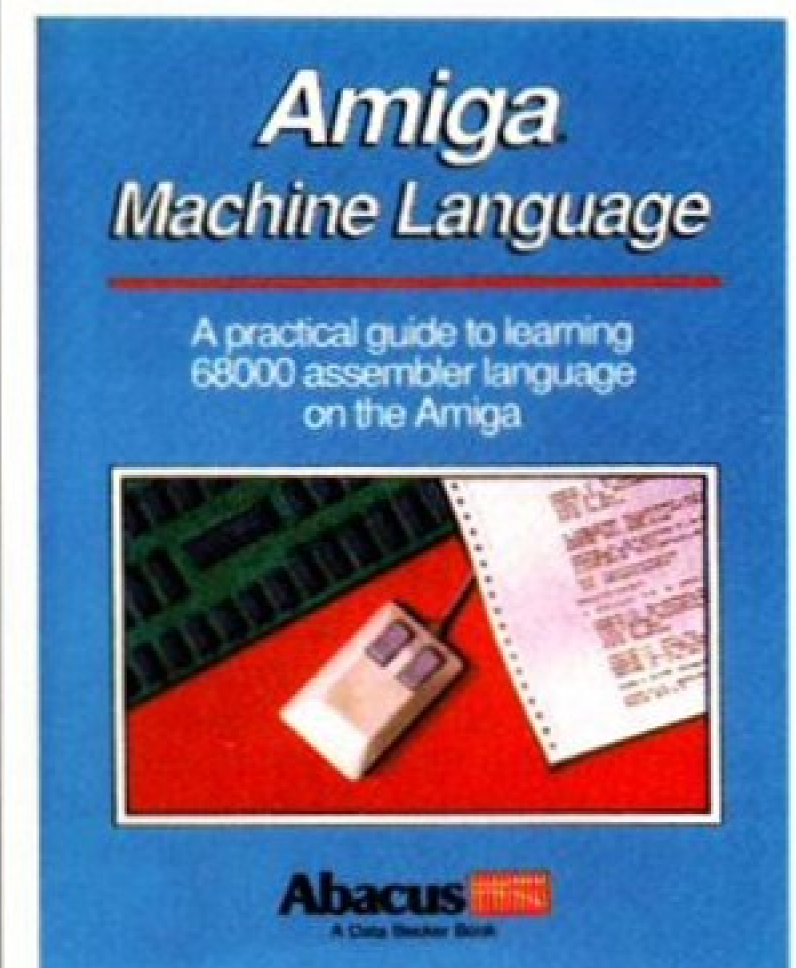
You will have noticed that there are loads of other files which we never really touch. The only ones we have used so far are Move.s Demo.s and Draw.s. If you have looked at Demo.s then you will see that loads of things are included from here. Most of these files are for various set ups, ie read the joystick. Others are called from various places inside our code, for example the sprite draw section. One of the more important of these files is Display.s. If you have a look inside Display then you will see the main loop of our program. It starts off by waiting for the vbi. The vbi, or vertical blankinterrupt happens every 50th of a second, and is the time in which the videobeam is travelling from the bottom of the screen, back up to the top.

We then clear the screen, this is so that we don't have the previous screen display at the same time. Clearing the screen is not always the quickest way of doing things, for example you could remove the sprites, and then redraw them. Draw All calls the routines inside of Draw.s, and this is where we draw everything, the man, the blocks, the objects, everything. We then swap the screens. The system you are using is called double buffering. This is where you see one thing on the screen, while you are drawing the next scene on another screen. The screens then swap places, and we draw the next scene (scene 3) on the first screen. Swap places again and so on.

This prevents the graphics from flickering when they are drawn. We then go on to the movement routines, and here we move everything, advance the animation counters, detect for collision, kill off the hero if you can. Check for a key press, if it hasn't been pressed, then loop around and do it all over again. Otherwise exit from here, turn everything back to normal, and terminate the program. That's just about it for this month. Next month we will start to make our small program into a platform game. This includes the need for gravity. See if you can change the routine for man_y so that gravity plays a part. Good luck.

For the animation of the man you want him to look like he is actually going the way he is facing. There are several ways in to do this. The best way is pick up the current frame of our man. Then have a look at the man's velocity, if this is a zero it means he is not moving, therefore you'll want to display the man facing towards the screen. If the number is negative then the man is running to the left. You have four frames of animation for our man in both directions, so check that the current frame does not exceed the allowed frames, or that if it does you set it back to an allowed frame. And that's it for now... see you next issue. AF

RECOMMENDED READING

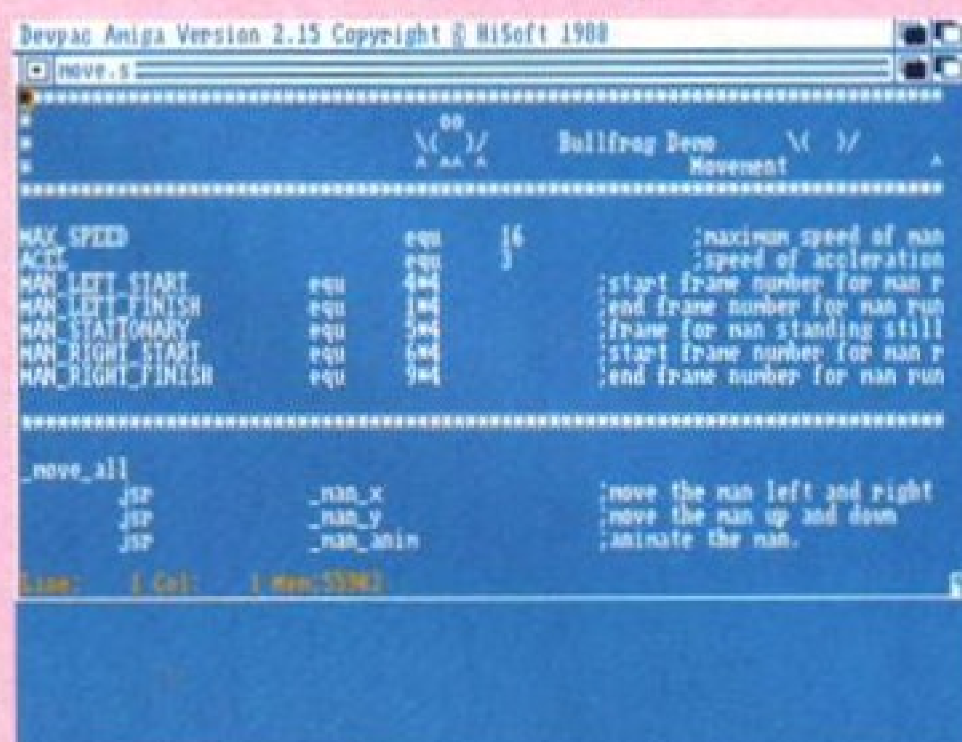


***Mastering Amiga Machine Language* by Stefan Dittrich is one of the easier tutorials to get to grips with. Other good reads: *System Programmers Guide* (also Abacus).*Programming the Z80* by Rodney Zaks and *The Hardware Reference Manual*, published by Addison Wesley.**

Using this month's code

This month, due to an especially tightly packed Coverdisk, the code has to be dearchived on to a copy (a copy, mark you) of the *Devpac* disk from last month's issue. In order to get at it, you will need two blank disks for the *Legend of Valour* and *Chaos Engine* demos. Don't give me hogwash that you don't want to see them – they are of the quality every programmer should aspire to.

Anyway, just boot up the Coverdisk but be sure to have two blank disks plus a copy of *Devpac* handy. After the two demos have been decrunched (which takes only a few minutes) you will then be prompted to enter the *Devpac* disk. Another minute and all the new versions of code will be dumped on to it, ready for you to use.



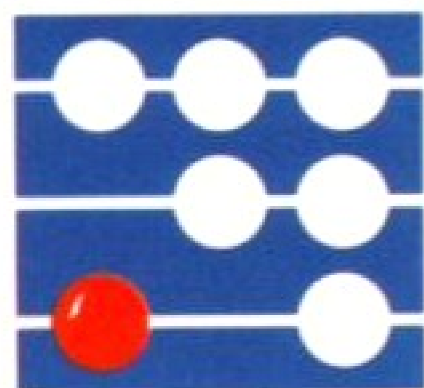
These are the equates in Move.s that can be altered to give different movement characteristics to the main sprite. Feel free to experiment.



Here are the dot lavels. Study the notes on the right very closely before you alter anything of the code. Assembling the changes should help understanding.



This is the main loop of the program, held in the file display.s. Be cautious about changing this area of code, as the results can be very far reaching.



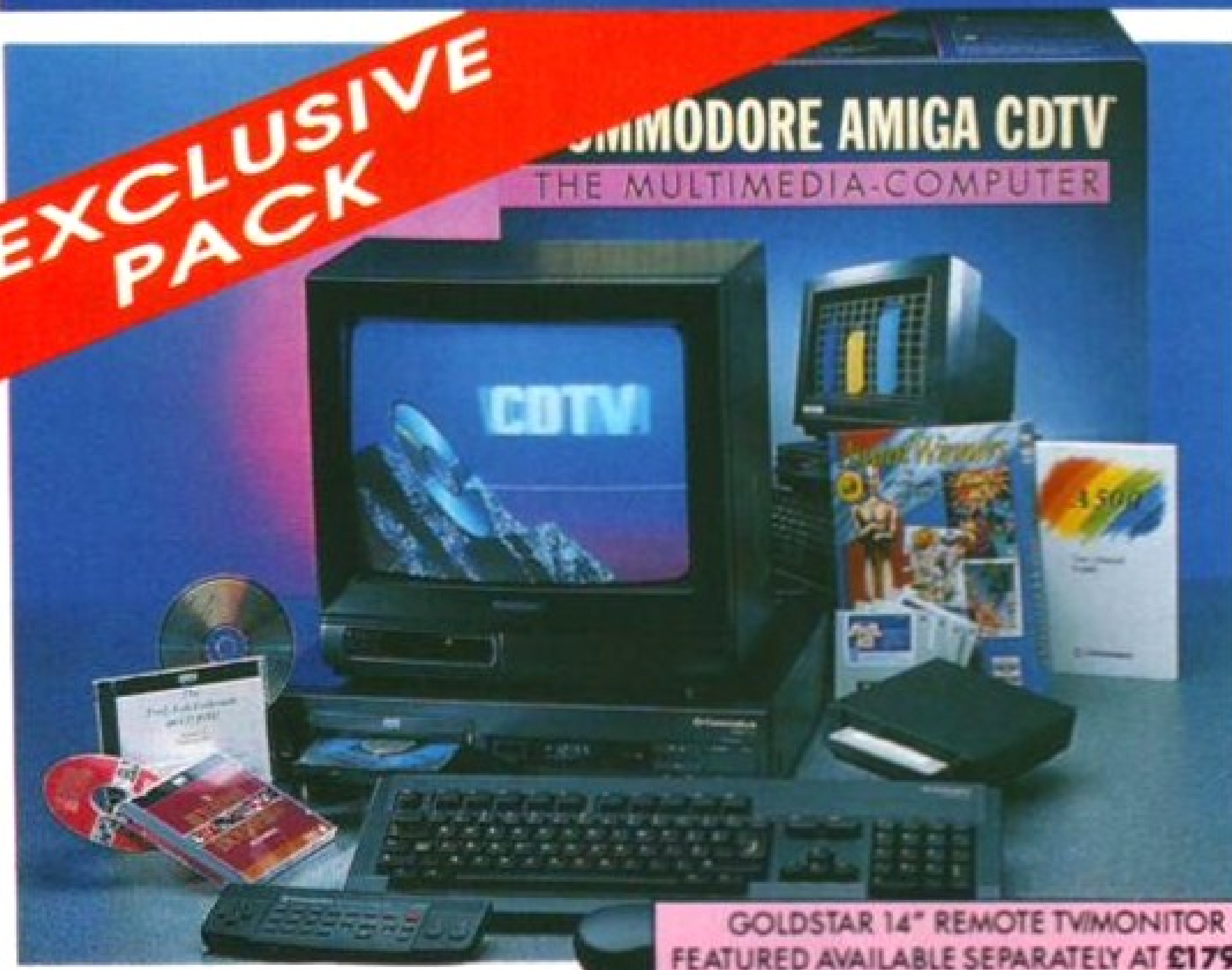
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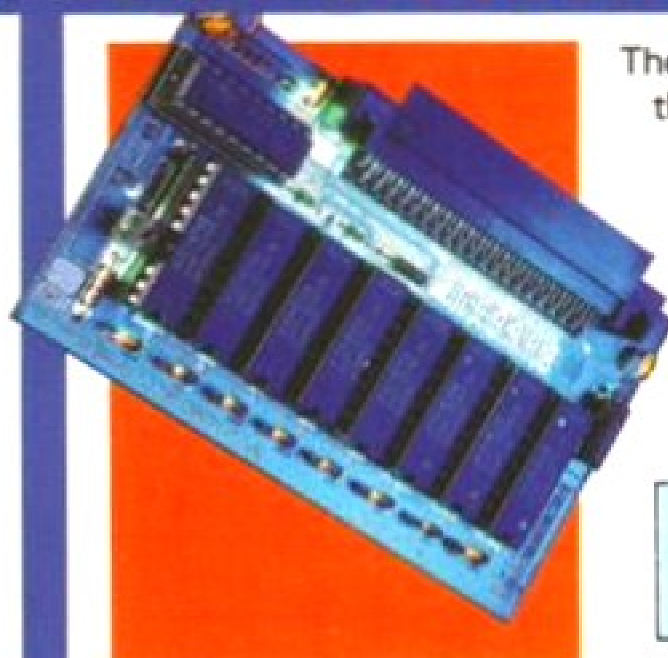


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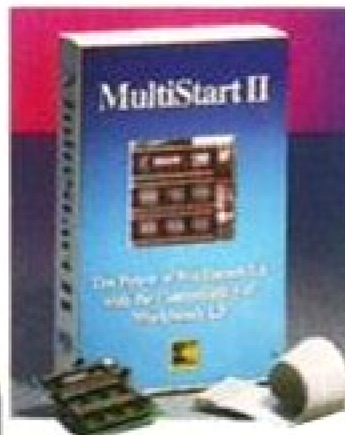
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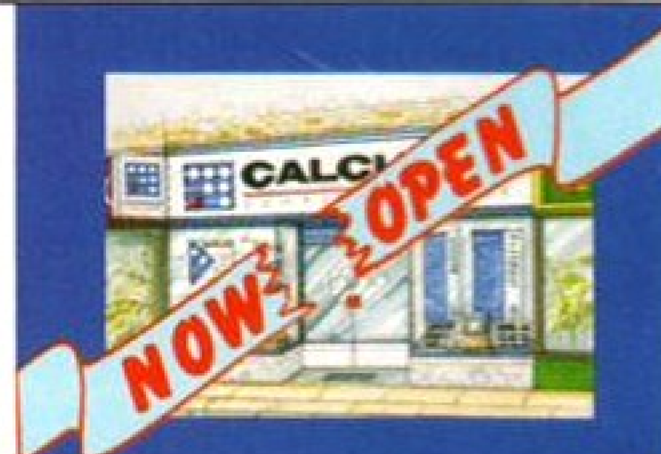
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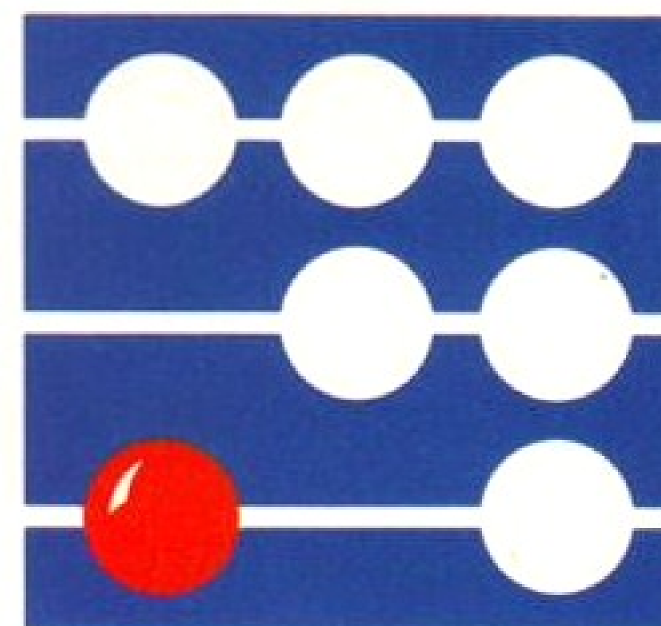
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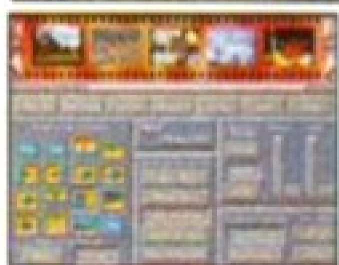
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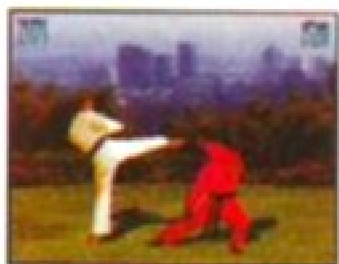
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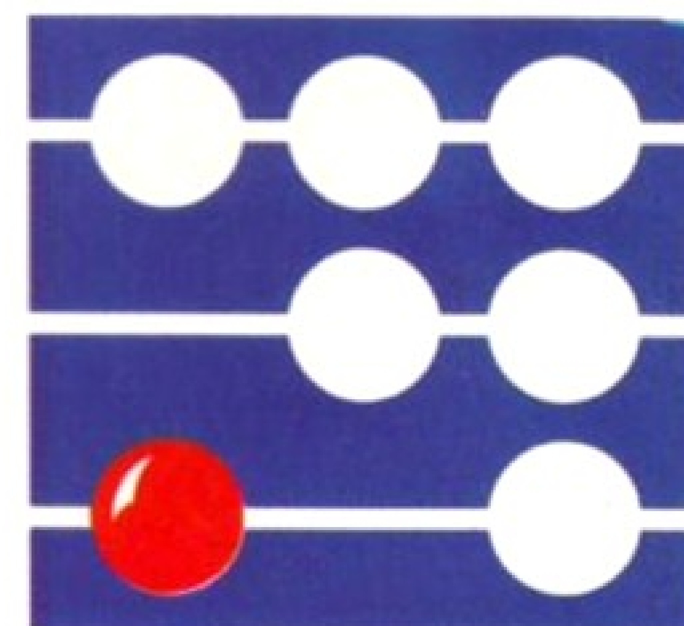
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Welcome to the section of the magazine committed to bringing you the very best in serious product reviews. Here we cover the hardware and software that makes the most out of your Amiga. If it isn't a game, we'll examine it thoroughly, and paint you the full picture on the following pages. No games, no gimmicks, just honest opinions and intelligent criticisms.

From hardware, like memory expansions and hard drives, through to software, like word processors and art packages: it's all in here. We'll tear it apart, put it through its paces and tell you the facts. What good is a spelling-checker that can't spell? Who needs a printer that can't print from Workbench? If it doesn't do the job you want it to, it's no use. We try it before you buy it, and if it's no good, we say so.

For more than two years on the trot, ***Amiga Format*** has been voted by computer retailers as the magazine to trust. They know that they can rely on us to save them from stocking a warehouse-full of garbage. And if we can save them money, we can save you money too. We'll even explain how you can get the best out of what you've bought. All our reviewers are Amiga experts. So sit back, read our reviews and hang on to your cash until you know it's safe to spend.

Contents

We've got a wide range of software and hardware under the *Amiga Format* microscope this month, and this is where you'll find it all.

How the Rating System works

SPEED (marked out of 5) ●●●●●
Tremendously important for both hardware and software: there's nothing more annoying than waiting. A purely intuitive judgement.

DOCUMENTATION (out of 5) ●●●●●
Although there are some packages that are so simple that no manual is needed, complex items benefit hugely from a good explanation.

ACCESSIBILITY (out of 5) ●●●●●
The target for all good software should be powerful but simple: this rating assesses how easy it is to get to grips with the item.

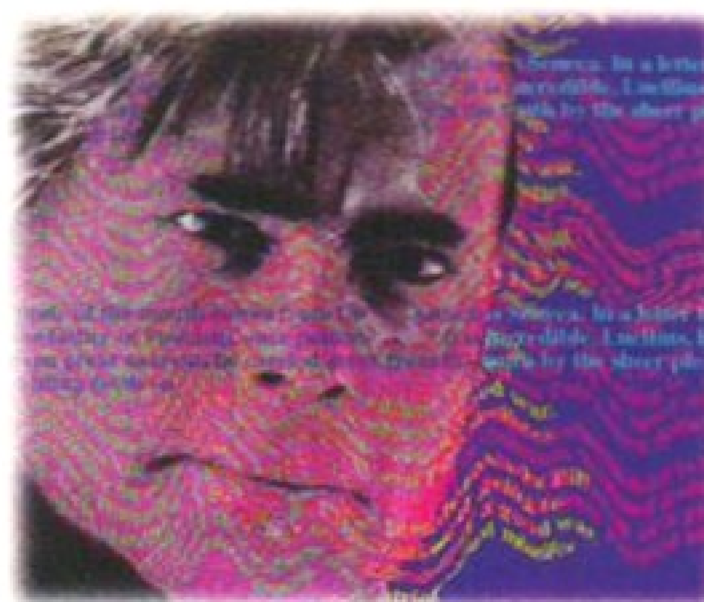
FEATURES (out of 5) ●●●●●
Does it do what you want it to do? How well does it do it? And does it also do lots of other things that you'd never have thought of?

VALUE (out of 5) ●●●●●
A pretty important rating, this one: if a package does everything you could wish for, it's no use to you unless you can afford to buy it.



The start of something 'serious'

Greetings! You are now entering the 'serious' section, where you'll find hard-hitting reviews of hardware and software. Find out what's under scrutiny this month...



Word processor round-up

Nowadays, all the world's greatest authors use word processors, including Stephen King, the famous horror novelist. The days of the typewriter are long gone, and it's time for your Amiga to take over. In this packed round-up, we look at the best and the worst in the WP market. From *Wordworth* 1.1 to *Quickwrite* 3.1, they're all here, battling it out for supremacy on... **Page 151**

Digitiser round-up



In the second of our big round-ups this month we look at eight of the best digitisers you can buy for your Amiga. Whether you just want to get the best from your TV-grabbing exploits, or you're thinking of messing around with stills from your home movies, you need to read this. Which one really does give you the true picture: DigiView Gold or the VIDI Complete Colour Solution? Find out on... **Page 185**



XCAD 2000

For a professional CAD image, you need a professional-quality CAD package. Is *XCAD 2000* just that? It's cheap enough not to blow a hole in your budget and it's packed with things that make engineering drawings as simple as scribbling. Find out how we have rated this newcomer... **Page 176**

Alfa Data OCR Scanner



We've all heard about paperless offices, but still the place is full of the stuff. Perhaps Alfa Data's new hand-held scanner can turn some of those paper piles into neat and tidy bits and bytes. They call it Optical Character Recognition, and it can turn words on paper into words on screen in seconds flat. Find out how we rated it on... **Page 164**

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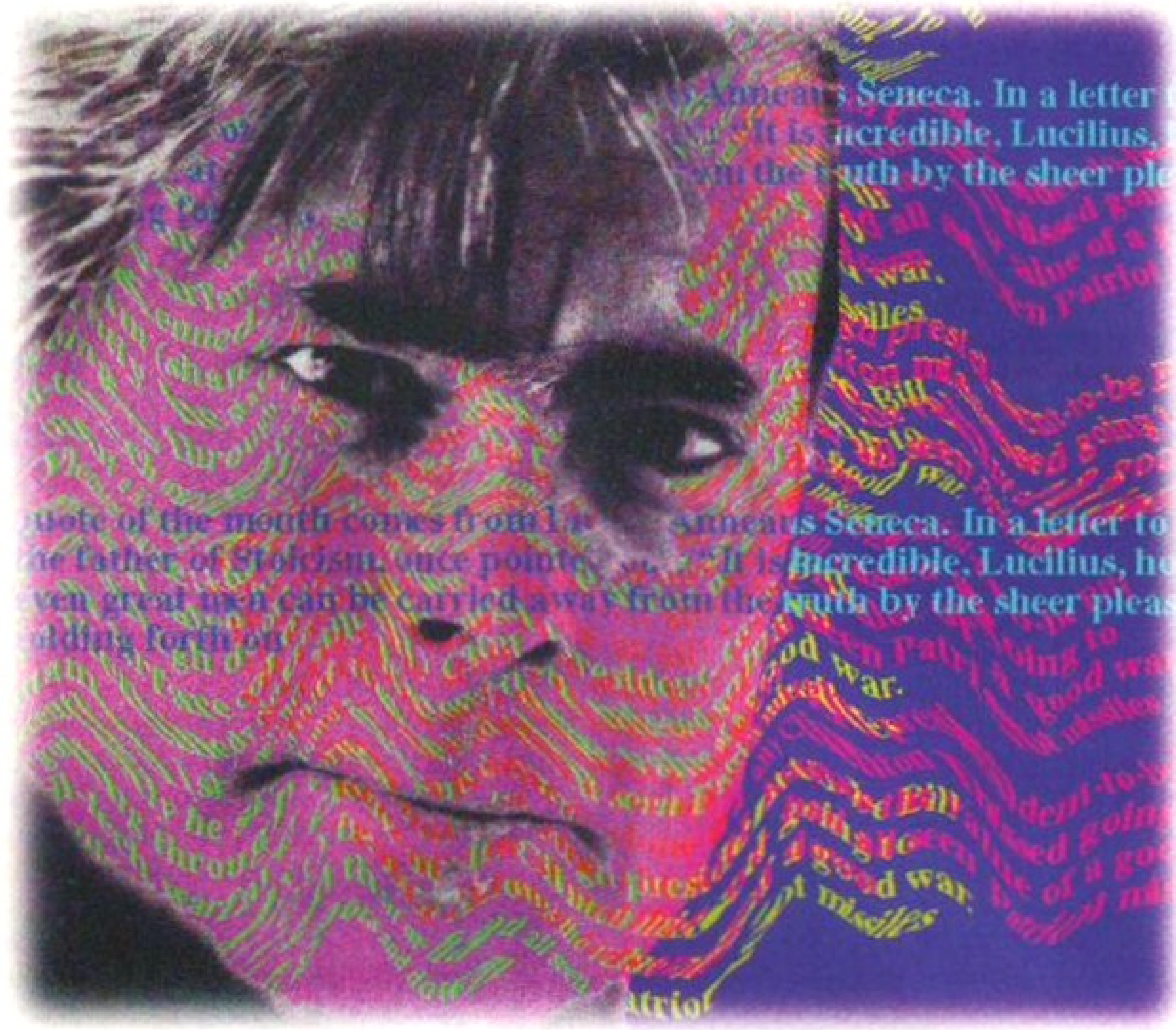
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Novels, film ideas, games ideas, idea ideas, angry letters, invitations, resignations, refusals, proposals, what can't you contain in a well-crafted letter? **Tim Smith** looks at the tools of the writer's trade as he examines Amiga word processors...



This man has made millions and millions of dollars simply by writing words. Does he use a typewriter? A Bic pen? No, as the end of *Misery* proves, Stephen King uses a word processor.

The word at war

WHAT WAS THE one piece of software that really popularised the home computer? Well, it wasn't a game, it definitely wasn't a spreadsheet, and by no stretch of the imagination could it be said to be a database. It was the humble word processor. And the reason for this? Everyone needs one.

Its ancestor, the typewriter, required you to have a supply of correction fluid close beside a mountain of paper (plus a slippery mass of carbon paper if you wanted to keep any record of your work) and, in some cases, a pair of heavy-duty ear-plugs.

Your Amiga armed with a half-decent word processor and a dot-matrix printer, is like a leap into the 21st century.

With the typewriter, mistakes are often punished with the chore of having to re-type an entire piece of work; a mistake with a word processor simply means pressing the backspace key a few times and re-typing a single word or maybe a phrase.

Also, have you ever tried to get a typewriter to tell you how to justify a paragraph; have you ever got a typewriter to tell you how to tab a paragraph for that matter? You can sit there for hours on end yelling at it in despair and nothing will happen. On the other hand, with your Amiga a quick stab at the relevant key combination will produce some on-line help for you in an instant.

Not only will this tell you all that you need to know, it will also tell you a great deal that you never even realised you would ever want to know: label and envelope printing, column printing, mail merging, macros, calculations, printing foreign characters, automatic page numbering, spell-checking...

The on-line spelling checker (and thesaurus) is the single most important asset a word processor has to offer. Just imagine typing out five pages of your rude (but incisive and ever-so-cutting) letter to the bank, demanding they retract the £15 charge for the letter they sent you about a deficit you were already aware of, only to arrive at the branch with the following line: 'And, if nothing is done abut this, I will witdraw my acount!'.

Even if you had managed to catch the mistakes in time, you would have been forced to re-type the letter. With a word processor, it would simply have been a case of running the spelling checker over the document. In some cases you can even use an on-line thesaurus to create new, and particularly gross, names for your bank manager. Apart from correcting bad spelling, your Amiga and a good word processor can also work in conjunction to save you a great deal of time. For example, saving standard letters and/or templated forms.

Not only can you create letterheads that can be used and reused without loss of quality, you can also save entire documents to disk. These can then be opened up and important text can be taken from them and pasted into other documents.

Making text look good is another skill at which the Amiga and a good word processor excel. Adding tabs using a typewriter can be a nightmare of fiddling with connecting rods and/or switches. With a word processor you can set and reset tabs, margins and columns to your heart's content.

In fact many word processors will have rulers that can be to set to enable you to use different layouts in the same document. Standard settings can then be retained for future use or can be maimed and altered dramatically for effect.

At the start of your word processing career, you are likely to be a two finger, slam-and-crash merchant, so typing speed probably won't mean a great deal to you.

However, the more often you use a keyboard, the faster you will get. Using a typewriter, you will eventually get to that crushing moment when all the keys seem to weld together in front of you forcing you to stop your train of thought, roll up your sleeves and discover just how much grease and fluff can accumulate inside a clunky, 19th Century piece of office equipment. Not with a word processor though.

The only time you really need to worry about speed with a word processor, is when you decide which kind you are going to opt for (once you've bought your favourite, you will usually be hard-pushed to beat it for pace). There are two types of word processors: those that can handle graphics, and those that can't. These are then subdivided into those that use the WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) system whereby adding an italic to a word will show up on screen in italics; and the non-WYSIWYG, which requires you to use control codes that don't affect the text until it is printed out.

WYSIWYG systems (they gained a name of their own many years ago when the idea of a computer actually doing what we all take for granted now was a pipedream) are useful for predetermining what a document could look like, but they do tend to be slow. Non-WYSIWYG systems are faster, but leave you guessing a little.

So, with all this for you to choose from, which is the best word processor for you? Turn the page and read on.

WORD PROCESSORS: JARGON BUSTED

A great deal of the terminology used in word processing comes from the bad old days of typewriting and so is lost on more up-to-date computer users. Although word processors are easy to use and incredibly useful, they also come with their own particular lingo. For the most part this is simple to understand, however, the more jargonised pieces of burble are explained below:

ASCII: American Standard Code of Information Interchange: a text file format that enables you to transfer text between computers and applications. The ability to save in ASCII form is an essential element of a good word processor. Some programs will also call this Text File saving.

Auto-save: some word processors will save documents to disk at set time intervals. Ideally you should be able to set the time. This utility only shows its true usefulness after you've lost two hours work!

Block: an area of text that has been marked out for special use. Blocks can normally be word-counted, spell-checked, copied, pasted and even saved as separate documents.

Block marker: two embedded codes that show the beginning and end of a block.

Control code: non-text characters that are placed in the text - they are sometimes also called Formatting Characters. An example of this would be to place **Italic** before a word.

Copy: way of storing text in memory without actually removing it from the document as you would with Cutting.

Custom dictionary: dictionary built-up by you of words not already contained in the system dictionary. These words are added to the custom dictionary during spell-checks. Also known as the User dictionary.

Cut: to remove a block of text and save it in memory for pasting. This will remain inmemory until you cut or copy something else.

Find and Exchange: a system that enables you to automatically go through a document changing words or phrases (useful when altering case, or removing useless control codes).

Footer: a small area at the bottom of a page of text (you can describe it as the bottom margin). Unless specifically opened, you cannot write into a footer (useful for holding page numbers and footnotes)

Form feed: a command that tells the printer to feed the paper to the start of the next page.

Header: an area at the top of a page that works in the same way as a footer (you can describe it as the top margin) useful for page numbers.

Insert mode: enables you to place cursor within a word and add letters without losing any of the existing letters.

Line feed: a command that tells the printer to advance the paper by one line.

Mail-merge: a system that enables you to write form letters and automatically add names and addresses from a separate file.

Merge: adding one document to another.

Overwrite mode: a system that enables you to place the cursor within a word and replace existing letters with new ones.

Page break: adding a page break enables you to end a page prematurely.

Paste: adding text that has been saved in the computer's memory into a document that has been previously Copied or Cut

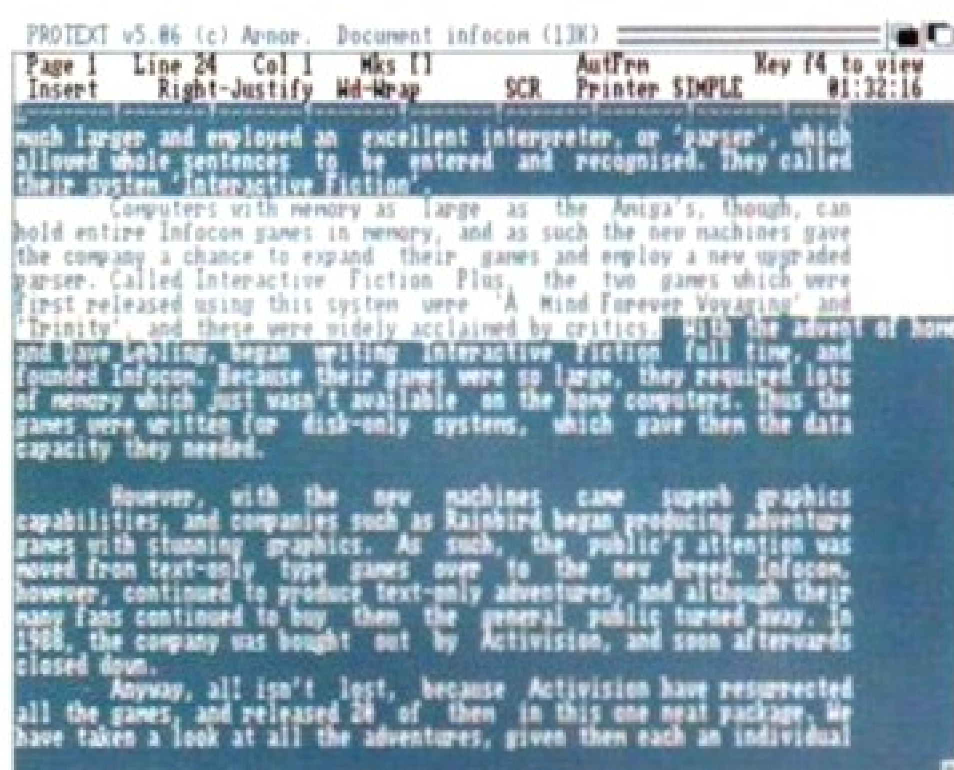
Rule: also known as Ruler – this is a line at the top of the on-screen text that shows you where the tabs and margins are set.

Tabs: indentations that can be used to mark the beginnings of paragraphs, addresses at the top letterheads or to space out information in a graph.

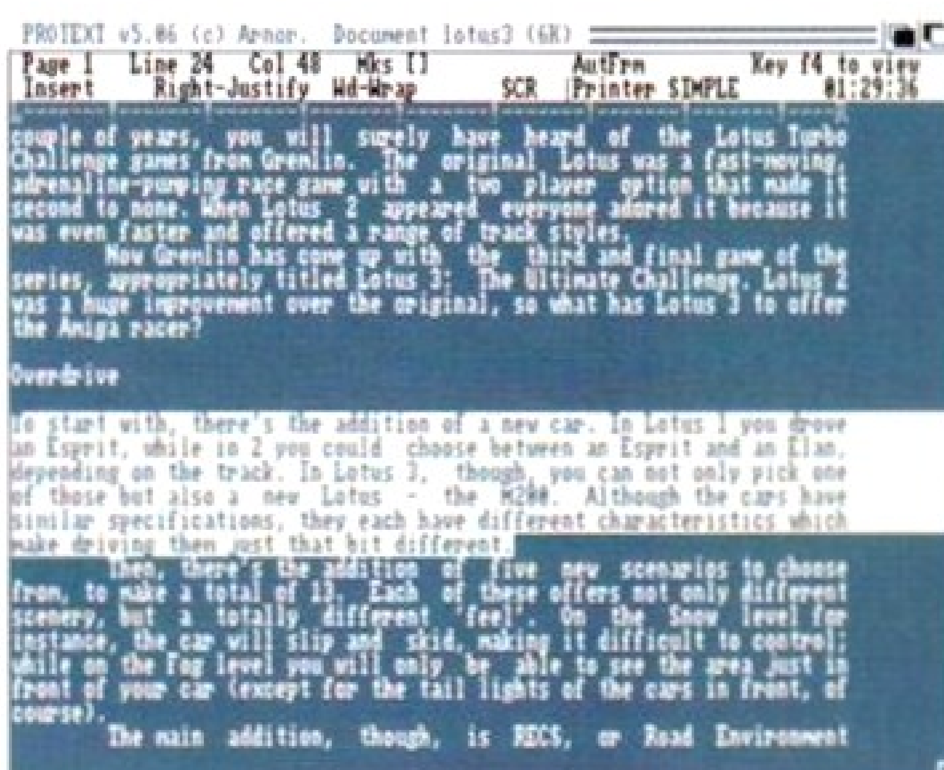
User dictionary: see Custom dictionary.

Wrap: also known as Word Wrap. With word wrap on, words that would normally be broken at the end of lines are moved to the start of the next line. This is useful for smart-looking business documents.

WYSIWYG: an acronym standing for 'What You See Is What You Get': this system enables you to see italics, bolds, justifications and other formats on screen.



Protext **can't be beaten if what you're after is a no-nonsense word processor.**



What you see is not what you get with ***Protext,*** **italicising etc, will only show up on the final printout.**

PROTEXT 5 £80

ARNOR 0733 68909

Protext started life as one of those incredibly simple programs but it has been built-up over the years without losing any of its simplicity. At heart it is a straightforward text-basher with few frills. In fact it even retains a Command Mode, a CLI-like system that runs in tandem with the pull-down menus. This mode is used to enter macros (a series of grouped commands) as well as being the entry point for all the other, menu accessible, commands that come with the system.

But don't let its clunky simplicity put you off from the fact that it is probably one of the best word processors around. All the basics are there, from a built-in thesaurus and spelling checker (it uses the Collins dictionary, plus you can create your own customisable dictionaries) to text formatting. It is not a WYSIWYG system though, so any of the italics, bolds or underlines you decide to add will only appear on the printout and not on screen. This adds to the speed of the system, and you won't find another word processor that can match it for pace.

Because it is such a down-the-line word processor, graphics handling is a no-no. *Protext* deals in words and not very much else. The downsides of the program are its mountain of commands. It sometimes seems like it has too much to offer, and it has a limited visual impact unless you plough through the manual and customise the formats (or the number of third-party books that have sprung up to service the market). These niggles aside, if you are looking for a sub-£100 word processor (that behaves as if it were worth several times that) with which to quickly and easily produce words, then *Protext* is the obvious choice.

Protext 5

SPEED ●●●●●

Screen updates are fast. Text entry is rarely held up so you can keep flowing. Disk access is quick from drop-down menus or from the command line. *Protext* can buffer documents bigger than RAM on disk.

EASE OF USE ●●●●

If you aren't bothered with tcomplex functions such as mail merging and macro creation, then you can dive straight into *Protext*.

WRITING FEATURES ●●●●

A full spelling checker with the ability to create your own user-dictionary(ies). This is complimented by a thesaurus. Word counting is also included. There is also the ability to split the screen so that you can work on two separate files simultaneously.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●

Protext is a text-cruncher with few pretensions to true-page layout skills. You can play around with fonts, print in columns and rejig rulers, but these are not its fortés.

GRAPHICS FEATURES

Not applicable.

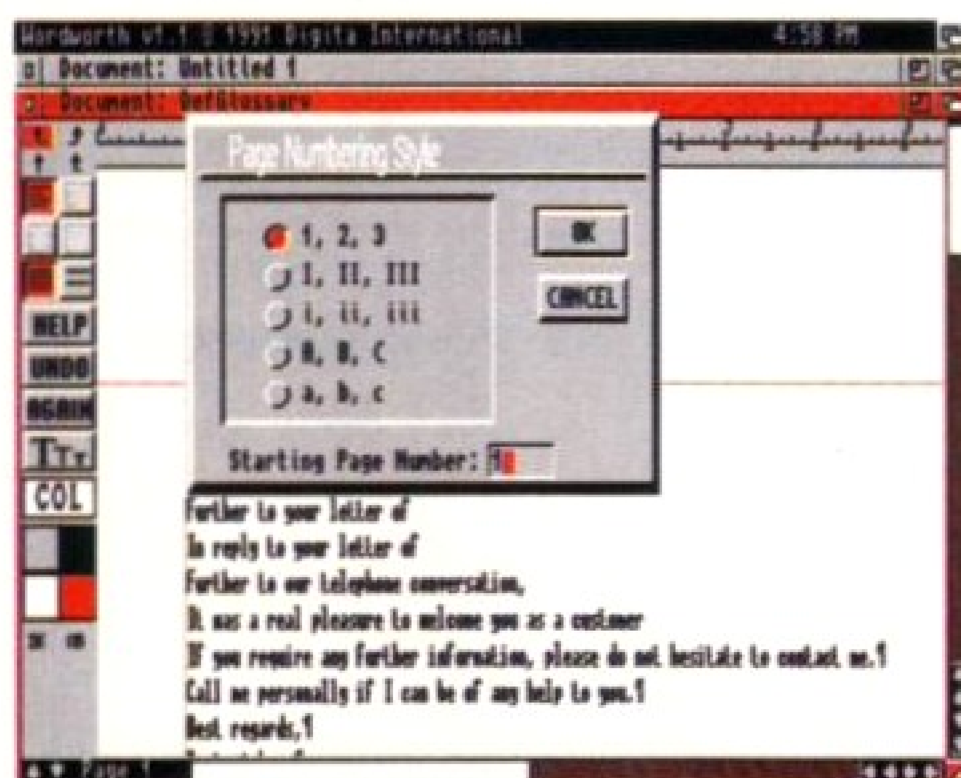
DOCUMENTATION ●●●

A little heavy handed. The manual does go into everything you need to know – it was produced using *Protext* (so it gives you an idea of its layout limitations).

VALUE ●●●●

If you have no need for tricksey graphics or flash out-putting, then its for you. Initially difficult to get to grips with the complex levels, time reaps rewards.





A new version should be on the way, but if you need a decent WP then get it now and you can always upgrade.



The number and complexities of the functions make *Wordworth* one of the better document processors.

WORDWORTH 1.1 £129.99

DIGITA INTERNATIONAL
0395 270273

Wordworth is known as a document processor or word publisher – you can use these programs to import graphics and a whole host of fonts. *Wordworth* is currently running at version 1.1, but there are strong rumours that an all-new, updated version 2 is looming. But for now, we'll concentrate on the version at hand.

To get the most from this word processor you need a hard disk with about 3Mb free. Once up and running, the choices open to you are wide. Not only can you place and resize pictures, but you can also flow text around them. Text can be manipulated in true WYSIWYG style: italicising shows up on screen. Screen updating and text entry range from the slow to the quite adequate depending on the version of Kickstart you are running (3.1 users look out) and the amount of RAM you have. It's not swift, and the more graphics you have, and the more documents you have open, the longer you will have to wait for the screen to refresh.

As you would expect from a program of this cost and complexity, full spell-checking facilities (116,000 words) and a (470,000 word) thesaurus are included. As you might not expect, it also comes with Speech – this can be set to repeat what you are writing: sections of text, or entire documents. An incredible boon for the sight-impaired.

When outputting text, *Wordworth* is well equipped with printer drivers (over 100 printers are supported, ranging from basic 9-pin machines up to inkjets). For a domestically produced document processor, with a healthy future ahead of it, you could do worse than buy *Wordworth*.

Wordworth 1.1

SPEED ●●●
Kickstart 3.1 users with little RAM beware. Users of A600s and 500 Pluses with plenty of RAM need not worry. A hard disk will make the world of difference.

EASE OF USE ●●●
The number of functions make this a program that deserves a little of your time to get the most out of it. Sure, you can get straight on with text crunching, but *Wordworth* has more to offer than this.

WRITING FEATURES ●●●●
The WYSIWYG features also make for a clearer idea of what you are dealing with. Mail merging facilities are included. Has support for over 100 printers.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●●●
A flexible system for creating, customising and updating page layout formats. Rules and margins are clearly displayed, as (what a relief) are tabs.

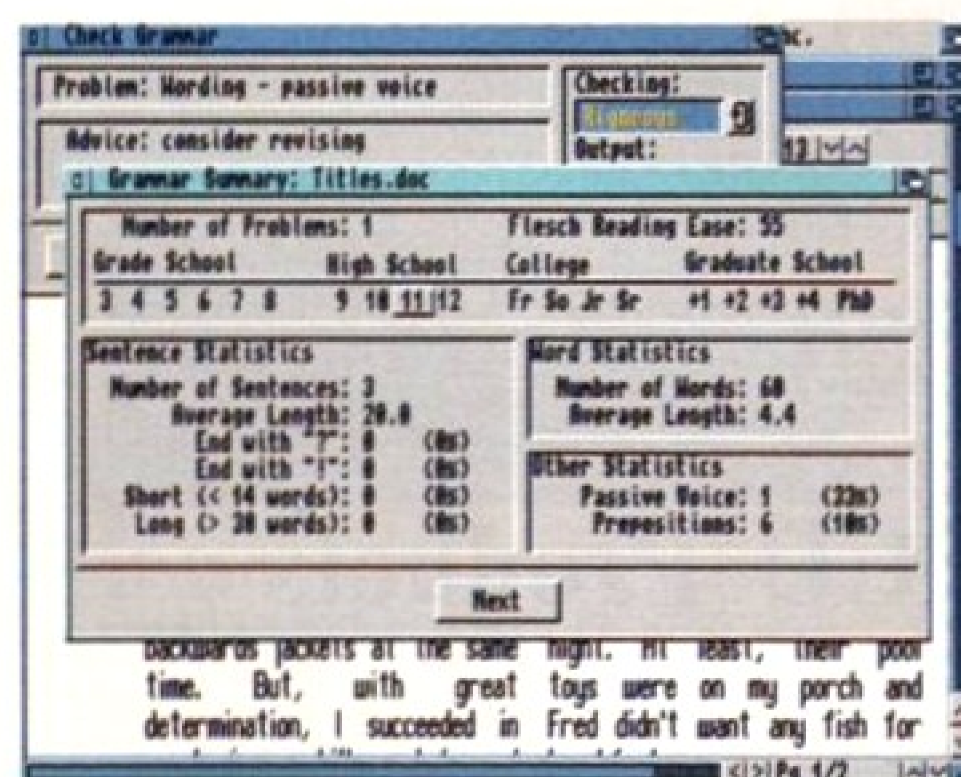
GRAPHICS FEATURES ●●●●
Placing pictures and text flow are well defined. Images can be added using standard IFF format in any resolution or size in 2 to 64 colours. HAM and half-brite images can also be used.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Plenty of it and no mistake. The 286-page manual even comes with some adhesive keyboard overlays.

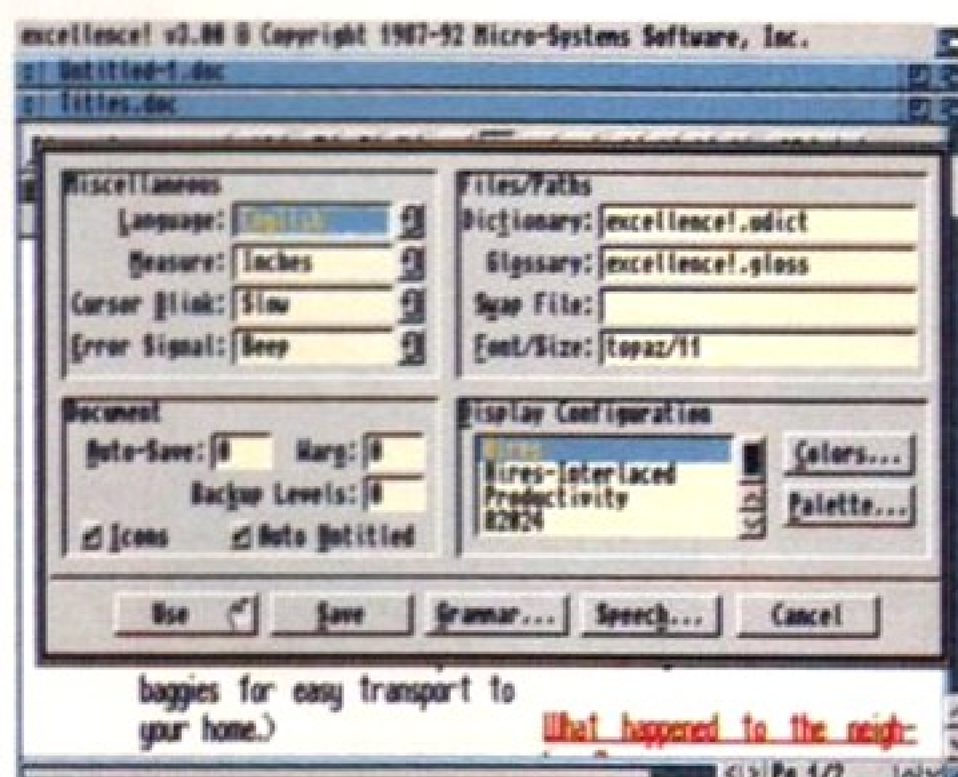
VALUE ●●●●
The possibility of updates obviously looming on the horizon affects this rating. As it stands at the moment, *Wordworth* has plenty to offer for someone wanting to put together complex documents.



89%



The spelling checker has a measly 90,000 words in its dictionary. There's also a thesaurus.



If you want to make use of the extras that come with *Excellence* you really do need a hard drive.

EXCELLENCE 3 £79.99

MICRO SYSTEMS SOFTWARE/
HB MARKETING 0753 686000

Not a bad attempt at a fully blown document processor (you can integrate graphics with the text). It comes with a 90,000 word spelling checker (it's US, but then so are the majority of the processors here, save for *Wordworth*) that makes use of specialist 'supplements'. There is also a 1.4 million word thesaurus. It also comes with two of the most irritating word-processing gadgets ever invented: the spell-as-you-type which slows text entry down horrifically, and the grammar-style checkers which are particularly pedantic.

Aside from these *Excellence* 3 is not far off being the best document processor for the Amiga. For a start it comes with 100 per cent Colour PostScript-compatibility. This means if you want professional documents from a printing bureau you will have few, if any, problems. It certainly makes this a program that won't let you down.

All the basics are there: a reasonable manual, but it's housed, sadly, in a ringbound manual) including good graphics-handling capabilities and the ability to place graphics in the header and footer areas. Thankfully it is also fully WYSIWYG – in fact this also extends to different font usages (the makers claim that up to 250 fonts can be included in a single document – a recommendation that shouldn't be used as the document would look vile).

Amiga integration is also good with ARexx and AmigaDOS 1.3 and 2.04 support included. You should also bear in mind, however, that 1Mb of RAM is required and, if you want to make use of the extras, you really do need to have a hard disk.

Excellence 3

SPEED ●●●●
Depends on the complexity of the document you are working on. Also, to get the most of the system, you shouldn't have more than two documents open.

EASE OF USE ●●●●●
Because it works with true WYSIWYG, you would not want to use *Excellence* as a straight text cruncher.

WRITING FEATURES ●●●●
Spelling checker, a thesaurus (they don't bother telling you how many words), mail merging, grammar and style checkers, index and table of contents generators – which is a Godsend.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●●●
Colour is supported as is a user-defined page setup facility. There is AGFA/Compugraphic outline font support and multiple fonts can be used on screen.

GRAPHICS FEATURES ●●●
Although you can load up to 32-colour IFFs, it can only display them in up to eight colours. Once in, they can be cropped and resized. Flowing text around graphics in other than box form is a pain. There is also no auto-text flow for resized images.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Adequate. It's another ringbound affair which means its fall-to-bits-soon rating is high. Its index is poor and sparse to say the least.

VALUE ●●●●
A reasonable document processor. It still has to catch up with *Wordworth* and *Final Copy* in terms of graphics handling, and true font manipulation.



80%

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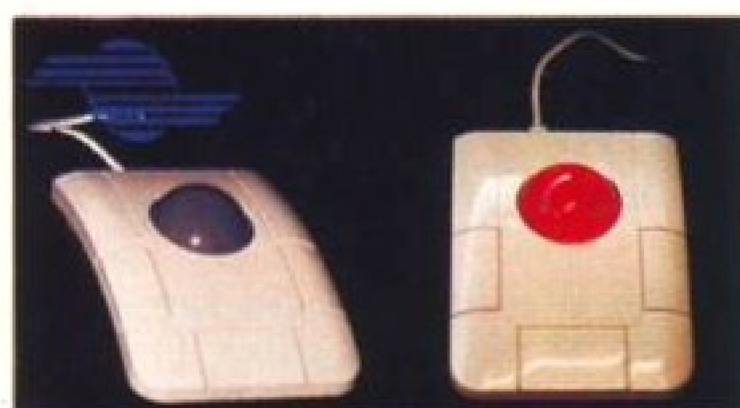
Touch UP , Merge It and Special OCR software.

Minmum system requirement 2Mb RAM, and a Hard Disk

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Trackballs

GOLD AWARD WINNER IN ST FORMAT 92%



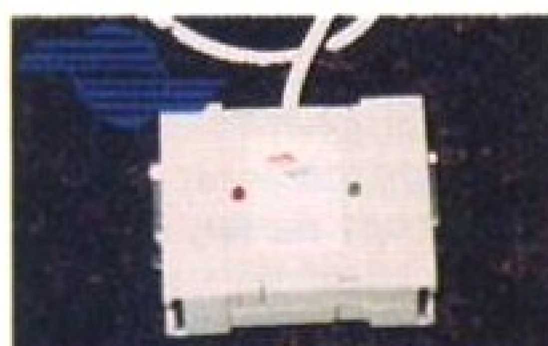
Stylish three button trackballs, with third button supporting auto fire and drag and hold

ST REVIEW 91%

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St Format 81%
Cu Amiga 79%

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A stylish Pen Mouse with quality construction and smooth fast movement. Micro switch buttons.Ideal for DTP,artwork,etc

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Cordless Infrared Mouse



Cu Amiga 81%

Remote control mouse, long working distance. Long life rechargeable battery. 260 dpi.

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GoldenImage Mouse with Mat £ 13.95

The Brush Mouse with D-Paint. £ 19.95 **St Format 88%**

GOLD AWARD WINNER IN AMIGA FORMAT 90%

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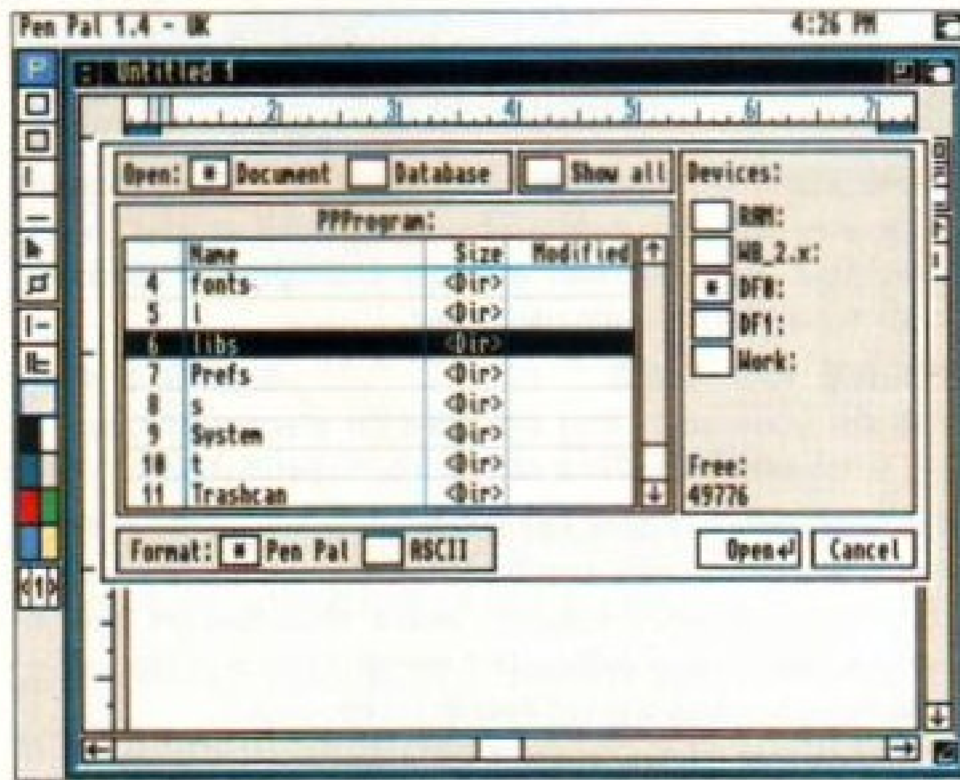
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52 Mb RAM Upgradeable	£299.00
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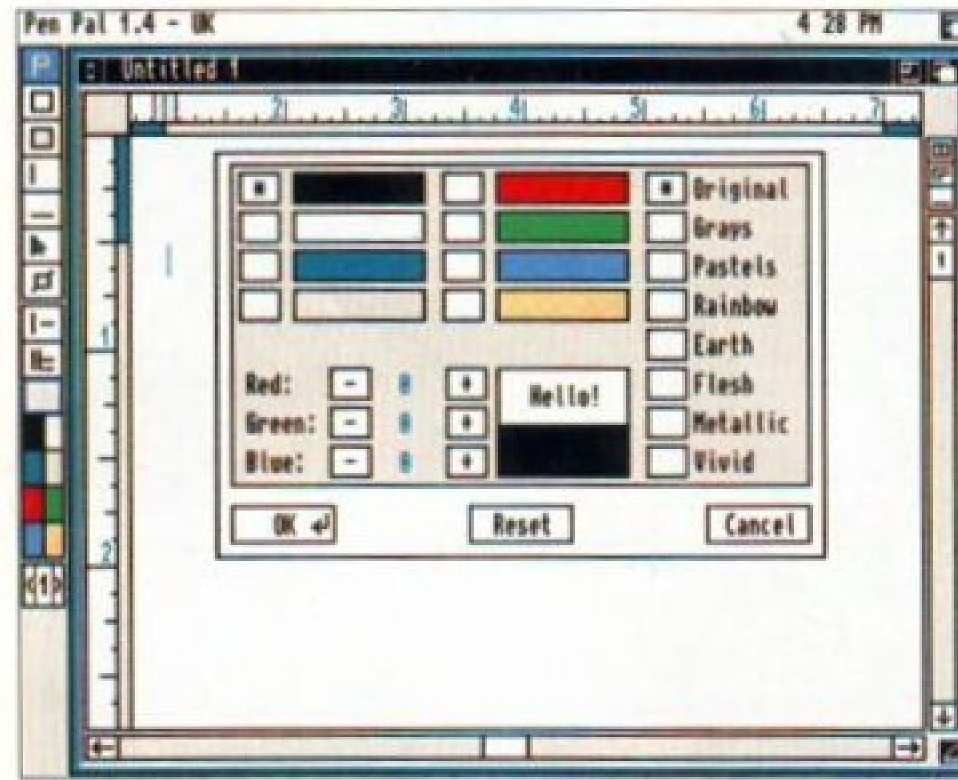
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If you are looking for a straightforward word processor then this isn't it. It's much more than that.



The great thing about *Pen Pal* is that you can import HAM pictures and print them out in all their glory.

PEN PAL £49.99

SOFTWOOD/GORDON HARWOOD COMPUTERS
0773 836781

PenPal tries to be a document processor. It can import IFF-format graphics files, it even has a (more than adequate) bash at flowing text around them. The graphics are not limited to straight IFF format, you can also import HAM pictures, however these can only be shown in eight colours. Fortunately when you come to print the images out, *Pen Pal* is quite capable of using the picture's original palette to produce the full 4,096 colours (or greyscales) on the print out.

At under £50 (just) *Pen Pal* offers all the basics of a full-blown document processor on a budget. It even comes with the ability to flow text around resized pictures. This is very different from simply being able to lay a picture on the page and flow text around it. The ability to automatically reflow text once you have resized a graphic vastly cuts down on the amount of time it takes to work on a document. Surprisingly only *Wordworth* and *Pen Pal* can really claim to properly make use of this facility; so if you're thinking of producing something like a fanzine quickly, professionally and cheaply *Pen Pal* is for you.

And this is only one side of the story; when resizing pictures you will see less image degradation than most other programs mentioned here. This is because *Pen Pal* uses some clever tricks in memory to retain the integrity of the original image even when you have mucked around with it.

In terms of straight word processing, *Pen Pal* is rather less to shout about. It is limited to the Amiga's own bitmapped fonts. It also lacks a thesaurus, and the dictionary is limited.

Pen Pal

SPEED ●●●
Text entry is fine as long as you don't have too much on screen. Screen refreshes on graphics are a little slow, mainly because the cropping and resizing are carried out in a more complex way than other programs.

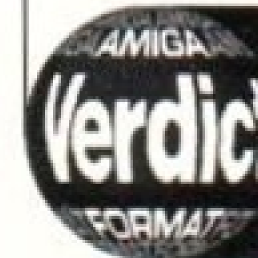
EASE OF USE ●●●●
Great to use and it doesn't take to long to get the hang of the graphics functions.

WRITING FEATURES ●●
No thesaurus and a weak (110,000 word) dictionary do not lend themselves to the writer's craft. The program comes with the highly useful built-in database *MI-AmigaFile*.

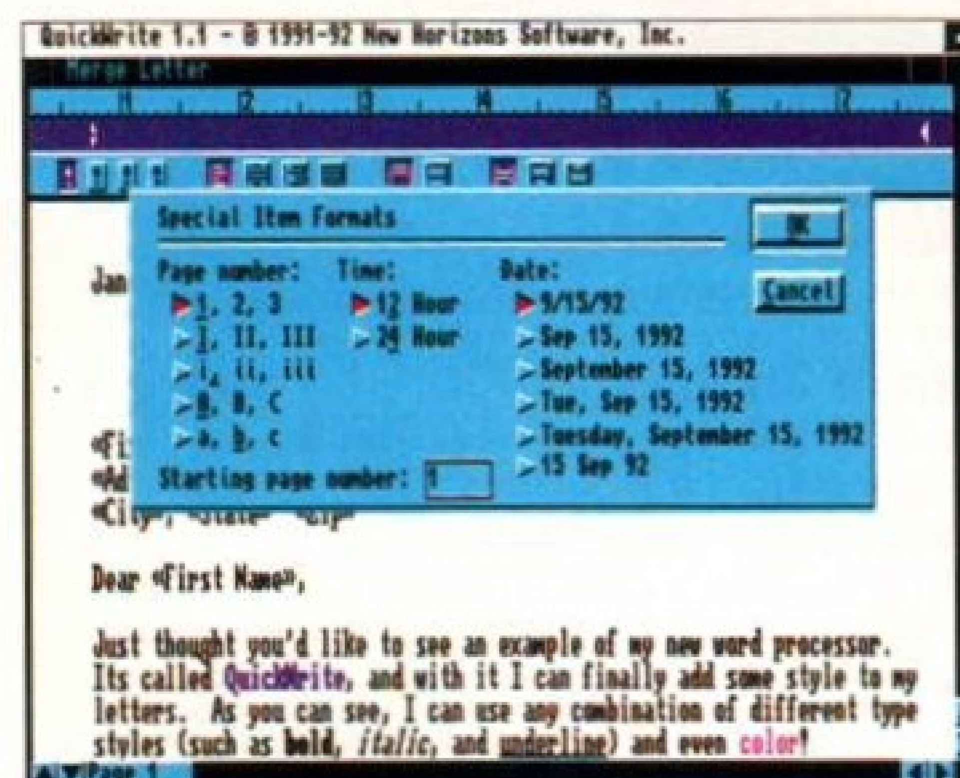
LAYOUT FEATURES ●●
No multiple column printing. No widow or orphan control and no auto-hyphenation can make the going a little tough for those people who want to make text look pretty around pictures. There is only a single rule which means that changing formats within a document is next to impossible.

GRAPHICS FEATURES ●●●●
For its price, *Pen Pal* offers some excellent graphics functions. IFF and HAM images can be incorporated. Cropping and resizing are dealt with very well indeed. It also comes with its own set of drawing tools.

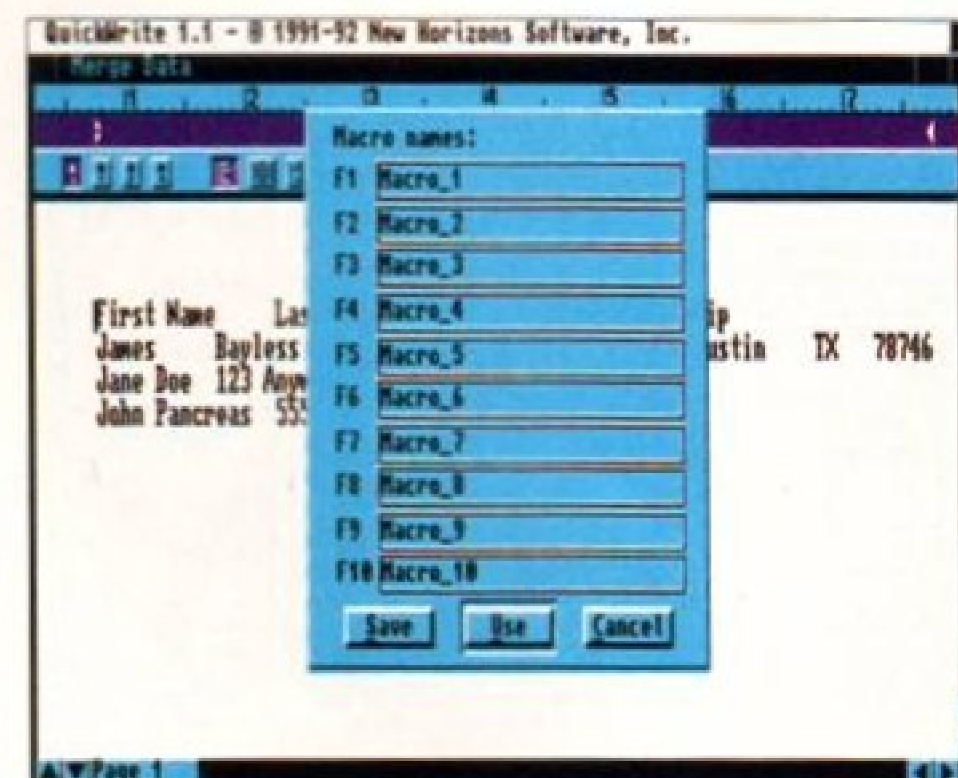
DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Good gear this, softbound manual (not one of the hideous ringbound things). It comes with tutorials which are illustrated with screenshots from the program itself. It's good to see a manual of this quality.



85%



Simple, but not particularly pretty. Write quickly is just about all you'll be able to do with it, though.



QuickWrite has a single rule, you can use the headers and footers and you can even page number, but that's it.

QUICKWRITE 3.1 £49.99

NEW HORIZONS/HB MARKETING
0753 686000

Pared right down to the bone, *QuickWrite* is roughly what its name implies – not *QuickGraphic* or *QuickPretty* – this software is concerned purely and simply with quickly churning out words. Essentially it is a cut-down version of the older *ProWrite*, and when we say cutdown we really mean slaughtered.

It doesn't come with a thesaurus, and it only has a tiny (in modern word-processing terms) 50,000-word dictionary. It has absolutely no graphics capabilities, and precious few text-layout ones for that matter.

You would normally have thought that this would have speeded the whole thing up, in fact the name suggests this; but it doesn't. Programs such as *Protext* (which is far more complex) or even *Scribble* seem to move along at a far faster clip than *QuickWrite*. In fact there is very little to say in its favour.

Sure, it is simple, easy-to-use and won't burden you with a lot a commands and key combinations before you start bashing out words. But when you consider that you can only really have 10 documents open at any one time, that the printer support is barely noticeable, and that there is no ability to use column printing or even multiple fonts, finding something positive to say about it is rather hard going.

Aside from it being a very simple affair (so it won't eat up large chunks of memory on your Amiga) it bears a passing resemblance to Microsoft's *Word*. You are probably better off passing quite quickly over *QuickWrite*.

QuickWrite 3.1

SPEED ●●●
It should be faster with such limited facilities, no graphics – you can't use widow or orphan control – you would expect it to move like script off a shovel but this just does not happen.

EASE OF USE ●●●
Fairly simple to use for what it is, plus it has a fairly friendly menu system.

WRITING FEATURES ●●
You can number pages and yes there is a 50,000-word dictionary but that's it. No thesaurus, a basic mail merge, no macros (without ARexx) and a lack of hard-copy options.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●
If you needed a really simple notepad then this would do the business. If, on the other hand, you want a partially featured word processor, look elsewhere.

GRAPHICS FEATURES
Not applicable.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
The slim manual comes with screenshots to illustrate the various elements of the program. Bearing in mind that there is so little to the program, the less than full some manual covers it all with reasonable precision.

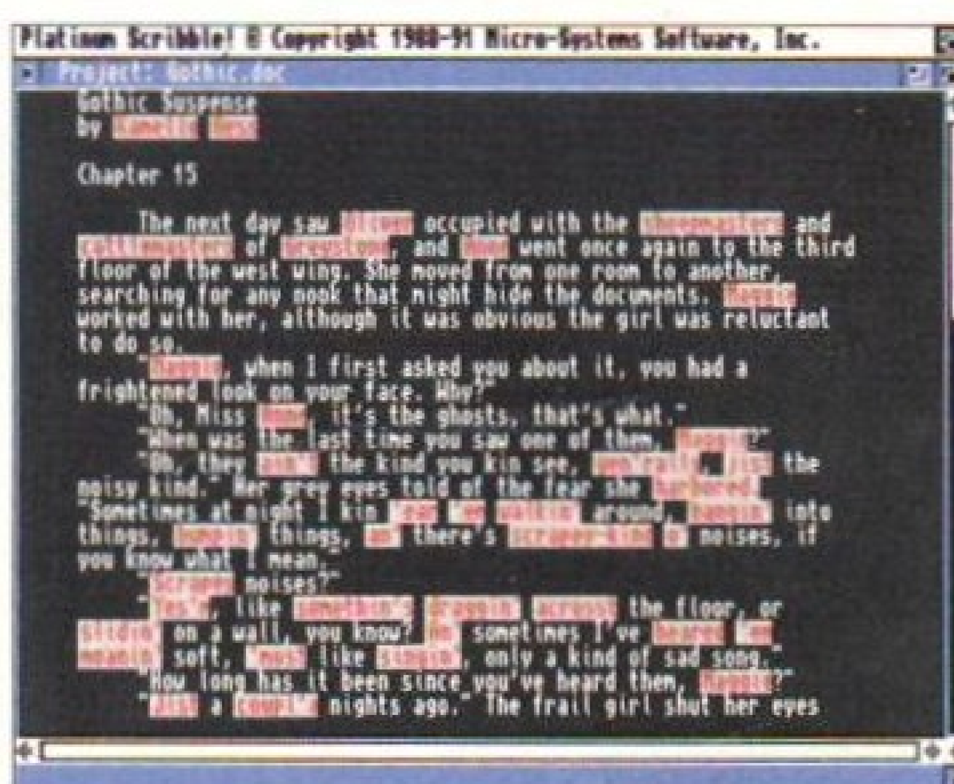
VALUE ●●
If you want a cut-down, very basic but quite good-looking word cruncher, with no aspirations to prettification, style or features – and you have £50 to spare – then it's a toss-up between *QuickWrite* and *TransWrite*. Make sure though, that the coin you are tossing is weighted.



50%



You can link *Scribble!* to a database such as *Organise!* to extend its functionality.



For a program that has such limited features, and no graphic displays, it really should be faster.

SCRIBBLE! PLATINUM EDITION £34.95

MICRO SYSTEMS SOFTWARE/ HB MARKETING 0753 686000

This is cheering. For under £40 you get a word processor that not only comes with a 104,000 dictionary and a 470,000 word thesaurus, but you can also print IFF graphics.

This is achieved by 'dot commands'. This calls for some hard logic work on your part as well as some place and hope. You have to place the Dot in the document where you want the picture to go. Then you have to estimate roughly how much space you have on the page – resizing the graphic is basically a case of fiddling with the width and height, and hope you get it in the right place.

Text flow is a case of running text above and below the graphic. In effect this feature is only really any good for inserting graphs and charts. When it comes to its writing features, however, you are looking at a rapid processor that comes with limited commands and structures.

It makes a stab at WYSIWYG, with bolds, italics, underlines, super and sub-scripts all supported. Printer support, however, is rather limited. But at this price it really does not matter that much because you will be looking for a word processor that enables cutting, pasting, finding and exchanging and generally putting words to work.

The downers are that it should be faster than it is, and that the system of dot commands looks extraordinarily intimidating at first glance. It really does take some time to get used to.

However, for under £40 and as a first foray into the world of word processing, *Scribble!* (and its incarnation in *The Works Platinum Edition*) is well worth a look.

Scribble! Platinum Edition

SPEED ●●●

With only four documents able to be open at any one time, this suggests that memory management could have been slightly better achieved.

EASE OF USE ●●●●●

The dot commands that are used for placing pictures are somewhat tricky, and can be a bit hit and miss.

WRITING FEATURES ●●

Scribble comes with a 103,000-word spelling checker (and user-dictionary support) and a 470,000-word thesaurus. The find-and-change function is useful but the mail merge leaves a great deal to be desired.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●

No text flow because graphic use is limited to 'dot commands'. It also does not come with a ruler for tab and margin settings.

GRAPHICS FEATURES ●

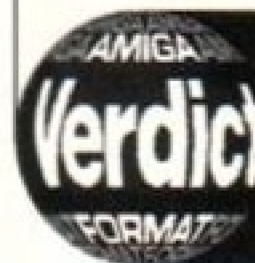
Well, you can print out graphics (IFFs) but you cannot see them on screen, nor can you change the way they look except by fiddling with the print-dot density.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●

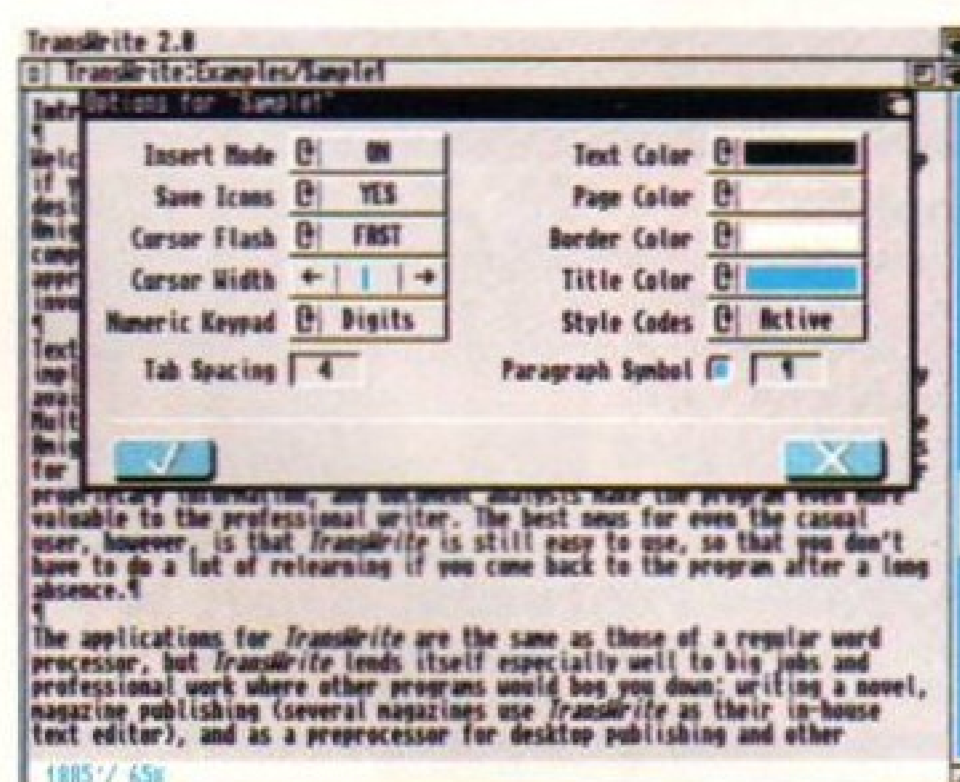
Average. There are a few screenshots to give you some idea about what you are doing, and the writers have done their best to give you an idea about the dot commands. A simple program with an adequate manual.

VALUE ●●●●

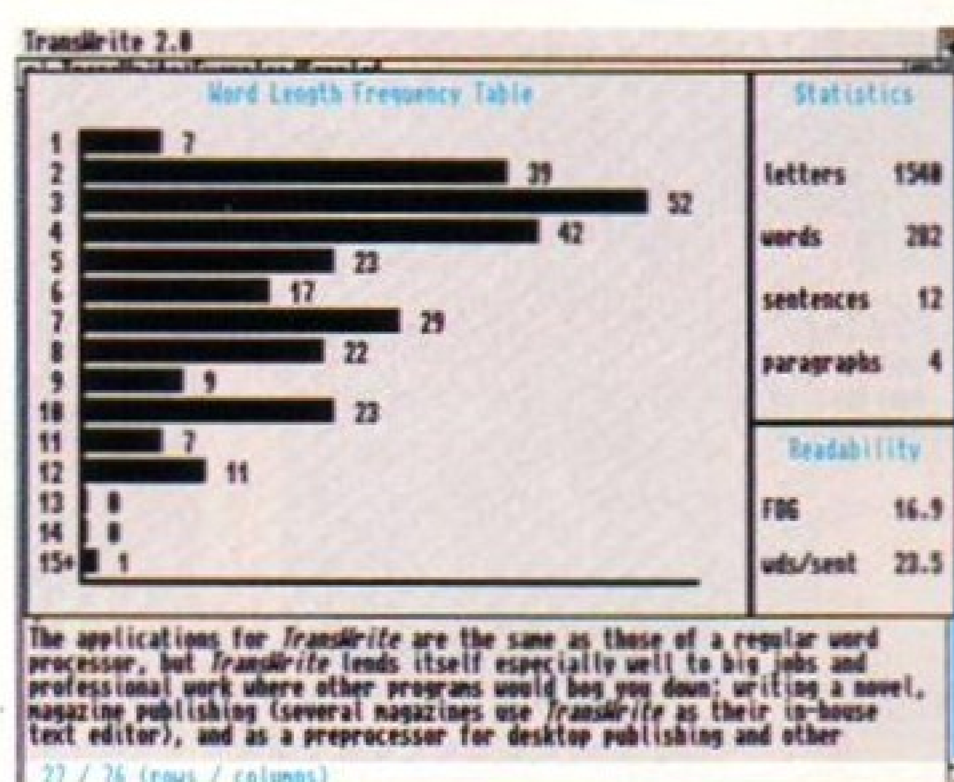
Better value than it looks from these ratings. Although it is under-featured in comparison to many of the other programs in this round-up, for its price it does the job of word processing very well indeed.



79%



One point definitely in its favour is speed. But if it's fine-looking documents you're after look elsewhere.



A nice little feature that you get with *TransWrite* is the style-analysis module.

TRANSWRITE £39.95

GOLD DISK/HB MARKETING 0753 686000

Rapid word crunching – that's what you get from *TransWrite*. The program was built for speed and has a 90,000 word spelling checker which doesn't have you sitting round waiting for hours before it suggests 'color' instead of 'colour'.

Before we go on, there are no graphics handling capabilities in *TransWrite*, so if you're looking for a pseudo-DTP package you should look elsewhere. *TransWrite*, like *Protext* is built for writers and writers alone.

To this end, you only need 512k of RAM to run the thing which means that it can be run from Workbench as a kind of desk accessory or from its own environment. The manual claims that you can open 'any number of documents' using *TransWrite*, in practice this actually seems to work. Because you are not bothering with details such as headers and footers, and columns not only can you open up document after document (and copy and paste text between all of them), you can do this on the fly.

It lacks rulers so altering in-document layouts is impossible. It is also without the ability to use multiple fonts – which means that your documents will look clean. It even lacks a thesaurus.

TransWrite cannot hope to compete with the *Final Copys*, *Wordworths* or *Excellences* of this world in terms of creating fine-looking documents. It is also left behind by *Protext* when it comes to added extras such as complex mail and document merges, macros or math/calculations. But despite all of this (and taking into consideration its price) if you are looking for a no-frills word processor to use as and when you need it, then *TransWrite* is more than up to the job.

TransWrite

SPEED ●●●●

Because most of the other elements you would expect to see in a document or more complex word processor are missing, you can really stream along.

EASE OF USE ●●●●

Because there are no graphics capabilities it's a fairly simple program to get the hang of.

WRITING FEATURES ●●

Terrific for producing words – it's just a little tame at processing them in complex ways. No thesaurus, the dictionary is limited to 90,000 words. But in its favour there is a quick word count.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●

There is an automatic hyphenation option included (some of the more complex programs don't have it). You can also make use of a preview to get an idea of how the document looks before you print it.

GRAPHICS FEATURES

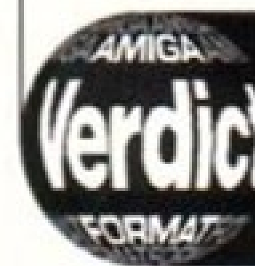
Not applicable.

DOCUMENTATION ●●

Gold Disk could do well to learn from Softwood here. The manual is flimsy as hell with an appallingly weak index. On the upside though, the program is so easy to use that you don't actually need a major-league manual in the first place.

VALUE ●●●●

I personally prefer *Protext*, but for sheer speed and ease of use *TransWrite* will take some beating. At under £40, even if you were just to buy it as an occasional word cruncher, this will serve you very well indeed.



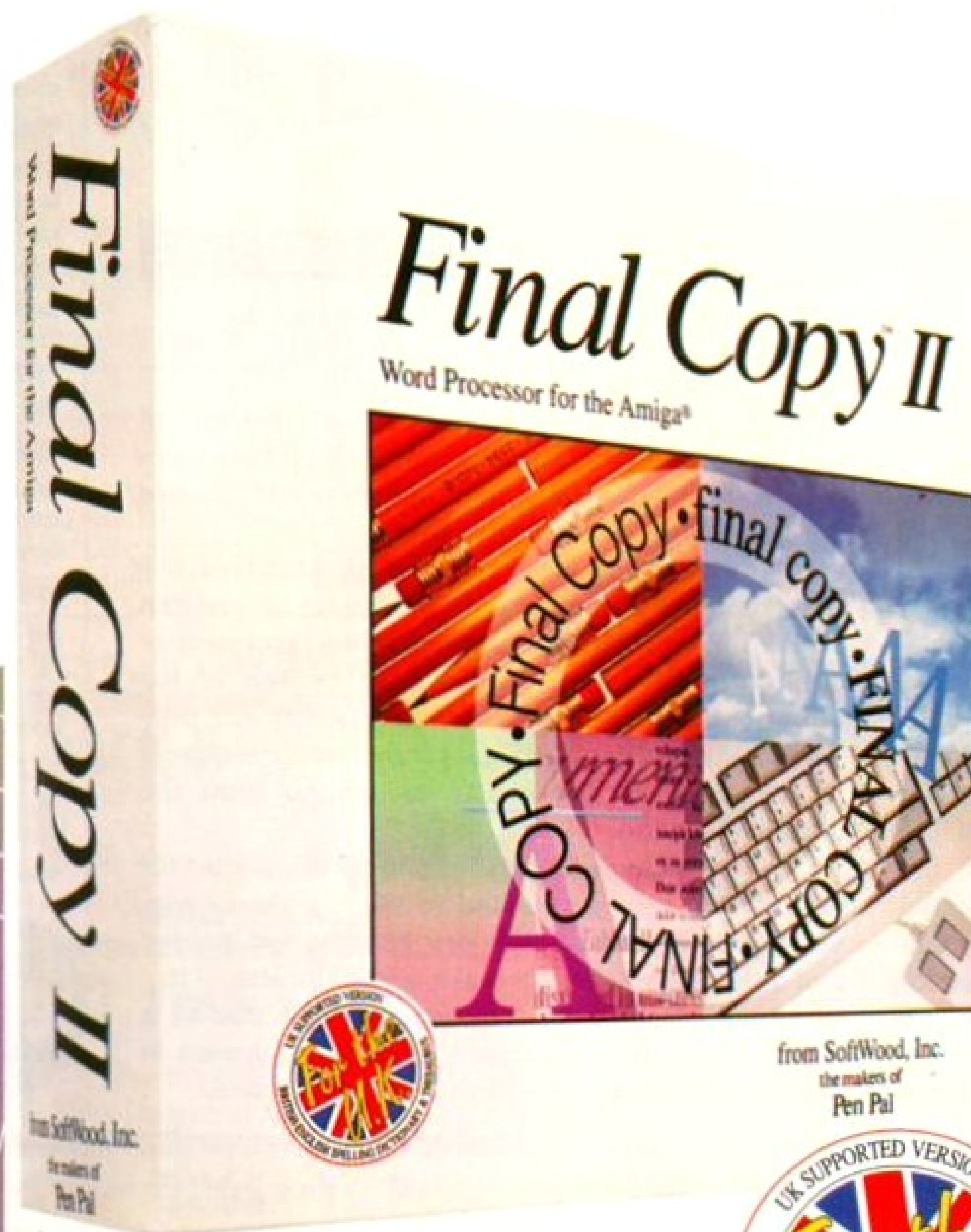
85%

THE FINAL WORD

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From the makers of Pen Pal comes a brand new, unique WYSIWYG Word Processing package, that's simply the only choice for those who demand the most from their Amiga.

Final Copy II is not only the Amiga's most powerful Word Processor with every feature you'd expect plus many more found normally in DTP packages - but also the only Word Processor that gives superb scaleable outline fonts from *any* Amiga - even 1.3's. Imagine outputting to your printers highest resolution, with almost Postscript™ laser perfection - no matter which printer you may have. Even with a simple nine pin dot matrix you'll get perfect printing* from Final Copy's 20 smooth outline typefaces that are included!



With its powerful new features, there's no better Word Processor/Publisher for your Amiga. You'll quickly realise the benefits which were once the exclusive preserve of the Macintosh™ and other high end publishing systems.



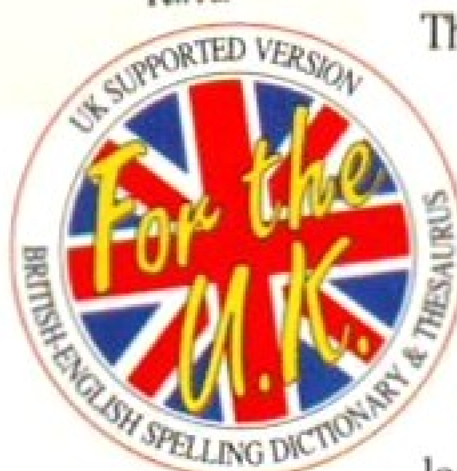
Simulated copy from a dot matrix printer with normal Word Processor



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With multiple newspaper style columns and integrated drawing tools - for boxes, borders, squares, lines at any angle, ovals, circles, arrows etc., plus colour text, along with many other formatting tools - your documents will look and read just as you want them to.

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Compatible with...

Amiga-A500/600/600HD/1500/2000/3000. System requirements... min. of 1Mb. RAM and two Floppies or a Hard Disk Drive [A600HD requires at least 1.5Mb].

*Any Workbench supported graphic printer, colour or mono, including... Citizen 120D, 124D, 224, Swift 9/24, 200/240; Star LC10, 20, 200, 24-200, and XB Series; Canon BJ10ex; HP Ink/Paintjet; Postscript™ devices and many more.

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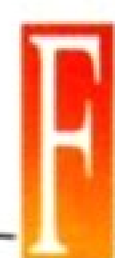
GORDON HARWOOD Computers

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Final Copy II encompasses a whole range of other advanced features, here's just a selection:

◆ Uses the latest Workbench 2 Style interface on *all* Amigas ◆ On screen command ribbon controls (format your document with the simple touch of a button) ◆ 25% to 400% editable page reduction and magnification command ◆ Title page, master pages & style sheets ◆ Right/left pages with binding offset ◆ Open multiple documents ◆ Fast mouse document panning and zoom/un-zoom ◆ External and internal mail merging ◆ Cut, copy and paste ◆ Search and replace ◆ On screen maths ◆ Auto-hyphenation ◆ Import, resize and crop IFF, HAM and 24Bit ILBM graphics and auto-flow text around them ◆ Text over graphics ◆ Outline fonts on all Amiga screens, and any non-Postscript™ or Postscript™ compatible printer ◆ 4 point up to 300 point [over 4" high] smooth text printing ◆ Text leading and spacing controls ◆ Condensed and expanded characters ◆ Positive and negative obliquing ◆ Background printing, allowing simultaneous editing & printing of two or more documents ◆ Fast proof printing facility ◆ Comprehensive range of additional attractive font volumes available.

E.&O.E.



Please rush my personal copy of the new Final Copy II information pack, including samples from popular printers, and a list of stockists to... [clip the coupon or call 0773 836781 now!]

Name & Address:

Please include your postcode



You can create some quite complex-looking documents with a little time, effort and practice.



As a word processor it doesn't stand out from the crowd, but in a bundle it's a pretty good buy.

MINI OFFICE £69.95

EUROPRESS 0625 859333

This is really in here under the table as it were: *mini Office* is an ancient suite of programs that were originally heaped together on the PC before transferring to machines such as the PCW before finally turning up on the Amiga. The programs include a graphics module, a database, a spreadsheet, a 'disk utility' and, of course, a word processor.

Because the programs are linked you could say that the word processor comes with all the facilities of the other modules – for example the graphics from the spreadsheet could be included as a separate page in your word-processed documents. In itself, the *mini Office* word processor would be a sad little thing with bare WYSIWYG, no graphics handling at all, a slow, irritating dictionary, no thesaurus and limited text editing/layout facilities. However, if you have bought the suit of programs for the spreadsheet or disk utilities, then you would not be disappointed by the text crunching abilities of the word processor.

Although you can incorporate standard IFF files into your documents, this is about all you can do with them. Any idea about resizing, cropping or in anyway affecting them should be left at the Workbench screen. This importing facility was only really set up to deal with data from the spreadsheet for example, or for charts or graphs from the graphics section.

When printing to screen, and to the printer for that matter, you are limited to the standard sans-serif 8-point typeface. This can be italicised, bolded and even underlined but that's about the size of it.

All in all, you wouldn't want to buy this as a stand-alone word processor – but its inclusion in the *mini Office* bundle will come in very useful.

mini Office

SPEED ●●●
The spelling checker stops at every other word over five letters. Text entry is quick mainly because you are kept to a single 8-point typeface.

EASE OF USE ●●●
Because the graphics handling is so weak, the chances are that you won't use that many images so screen refreshes are reasonably rapid but not blistering.

WRITING FEATURES ●●
Spelling checker but no thesaurus. Because you can look to the other modules in the *mini Office* suite, you can pull in data for mail merging from the spreadsheet. It is WYSIWYG but you are limited to a single font.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●
There is still no auto-hyphenation, but you can use multiple rulers (which can be cut and pasted all over a document) in order to pretty the whole thing up.

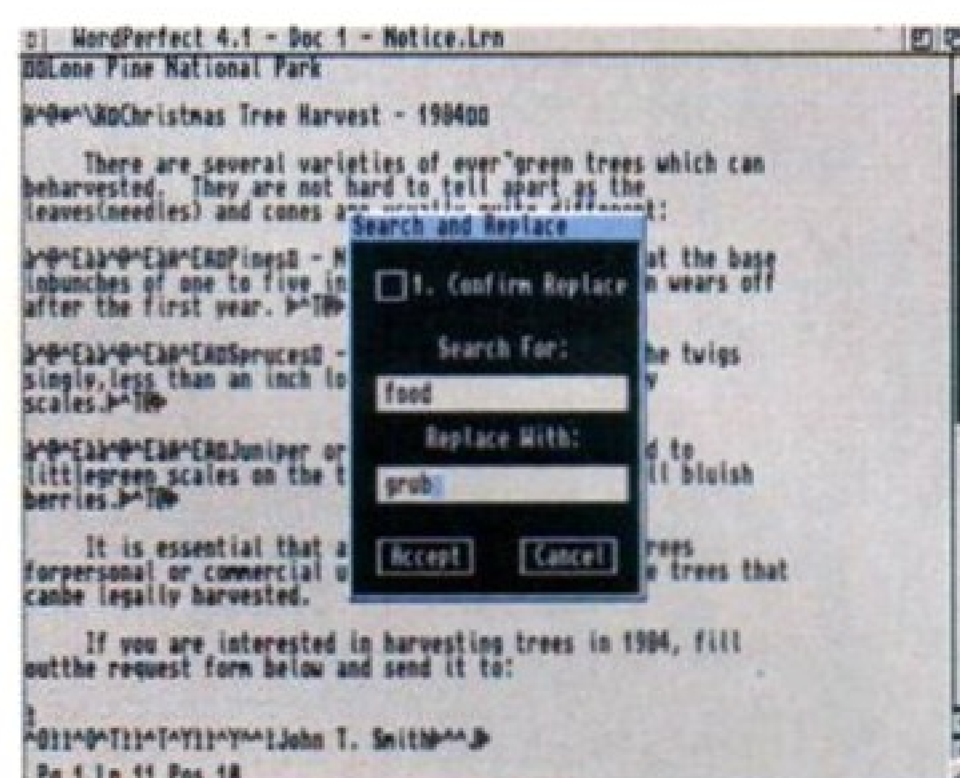
GRAPHICS FEATURES ●●
Because of its modular nature you can import graphics from the spreadsheet and graphics areas of the suite. Once in there is very little you can do with them.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Well documented as part of a wider suite of programs. It is covered as a stand-alone program and as part of the wider picture with the inclusion of screenshots and some clearly written text.

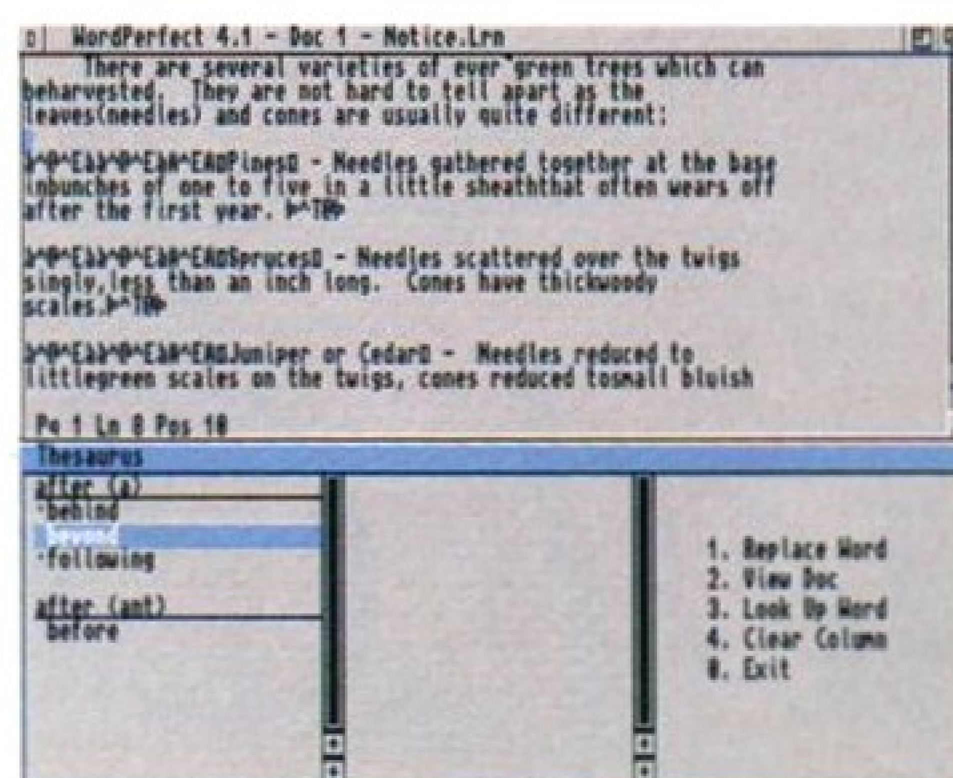
VALUE ●●
On its own it would be very limited and limiting – hence this rating. However, as part of an integrated set-up it is useful and functional without standing out.



50%



The Search and Replace in full-effect; over the years, *WordPerfect* has been upgraded and improved.



Want to make yourself clearly understood? Can't think of a way to do it? Try the thesaurus.

WORDPERFECT £217.38

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I hate software that comes with crappy ringbinders, with sealed pages, the holes of which do not fit the binder's clasps (one of which immediately opens up slightly tearing all the pages). I hate this because it comes from the old PC tradition that says that ring binders are useful to keep all the separate pages of upgrade information that seep through after the first bundle is released.

Guess what you get with WordPerfect? This ancient and revered program comes from the depths of PC-land, and is now showing its age. According to the lady at WordPerfect Corp it is also being discontinued (she also said have a nice day, which I did not having spent it with WordPerfect).

The program works with combination after combination of key presses (or with the far friendlier pull-down menu system that will be familiar to most Amiga users.

WordPerfect is WYSIWYG to the extent that it will show you bolds. With italics however, it has problems. You have to Show Codes if you want to see where the italics come in (shown by an 'I' at the start of a line).

All this said, you can't knock a word processor with the track record and calibre of *WordPerfect*. To give the company their due, they have included a kind of pseudo-outlining module, and a mail merge that both do their respective jobs with a minimum of fuss and bother. The port from PC to Amiga has been carried out with greater attention than a lot of other programs. Still, iwill be a rare sight in the shops by the end of this year, and there are better Amiga-specific WPs about the place.

WordPerfect

SPEED ●●●●
Once you've got used to the key command combinations that are used to save you using the pull-down menus, you can steam along with your word processing (it was designed for speed initially). Hard disk is recommended, two floppies are mandatory.

EASE OF USE ●●●●
Once you've got passed the initial amazement that a program this old can still be this complex, you will find it simple to understand and explore.

WRITING FEATURES ●●
The Speller utility comes with 115,000 words, and happily it checks for double occurrences of words as well as providing the word count. The number of words in the thesaurus is not stated.

LAYOUT FEATURES ●●
Well yes, you can add tabs and rulers, but *WordPerfect* really wasn't developed to do more than crunch words – for example there is no column printing. If you are looking for a great text layout engine, look elsewhere.

GRAPHICS FEATURES
Not applicable.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
A ringbound manual that falls apart. But it's well laid out, with a glossary and plenty of tutorials.

VALUE ●●●●
Even if WordPerfect are being truthful about dropping their program in the next year, they will still offer support, which is a positive point. For a word cruncher, *Protext* beats it hands down though.



60%

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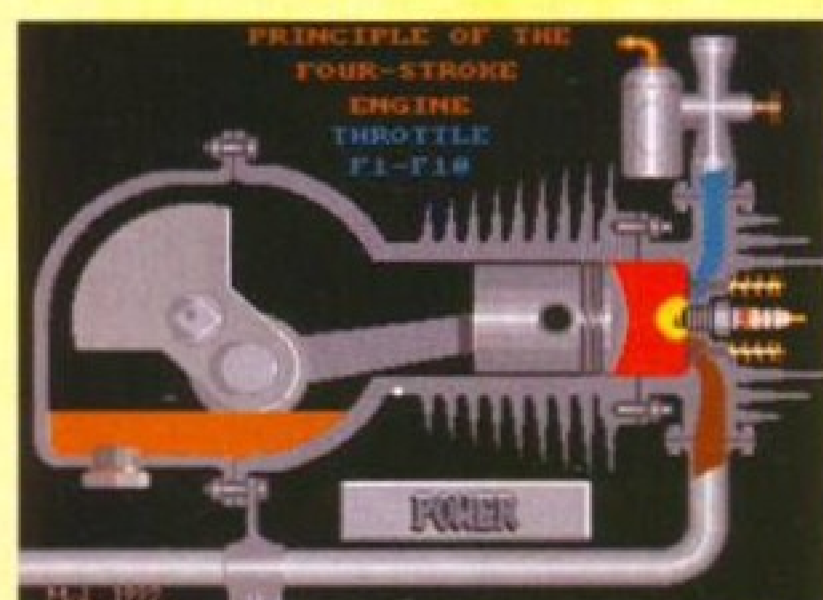
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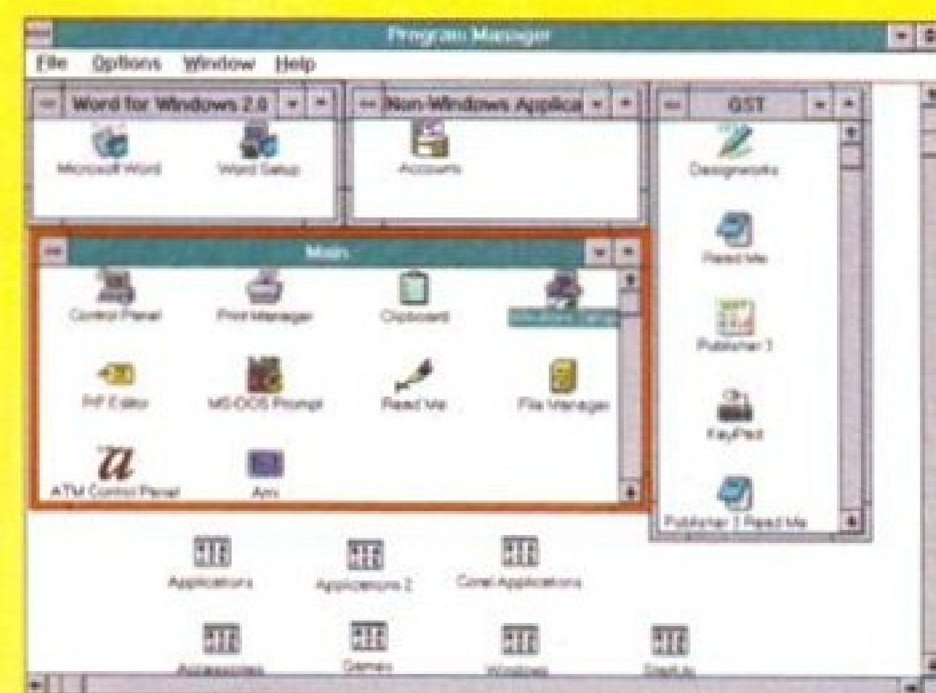
Amiga Shopper's news pages are always the first to bring you the complete story – we're the ones who first told the world about the death of the A500. This month we have a full report on the launch of Commodore's new A4000 in Pasadena, California. Find out what makes this one so special, and what it could mean for the evolution of your machine. PLUS: the $250 68030 accelerator card for your Amiga which will turn it into an A3000

COMMODORE'S NEW AMIGA



PUBLIC DOMAIN WORLD

This month's regular look at the range of low-cost and no-cost software takes in a program to illustrate the inner workings of a four-stroke petrol engine, a program to help you write up your will, something to teach you morse code, and a replacement for the operating system



EMULATION SENSATION

Microsoft *Windows* on your Amiga? It's possible with a PC emulator, and more and more people are finding reasons to buy one. We review and rate the emulators available and offer our verdict on how best to tap into the wealth of PC software

THE GREAT DEBATE

We got hold of the most authoritative experts in the business, sat them down around a table with a few drinks and pumped them with questions... What emerges is the most in-depth discussion of the Amiga's past, present and future you'll ever read. What kind of new machine should Commodore be thinking about? How will the Amiga cope with the PC and console threats? Read all about it in this no-holds barred six page exposé



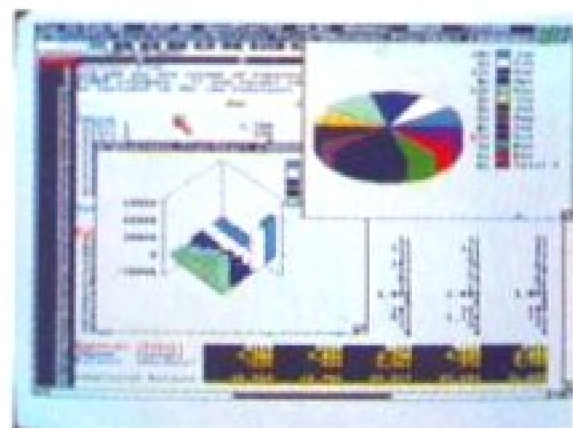
AMIGA ANSWERS

WE'LL PUT AN END TO YOUR AMIGA ANGST...

It's the only solution to every Amiga problem you're ever likely to encounter. And whatever your hassle may be, *Amiga Answers* has the best brains in the business to help you out. Just send in that query and watch it disappear. This month, there's 17 pages of questions – all answered in the most clear, informative and friendly style you could hope for

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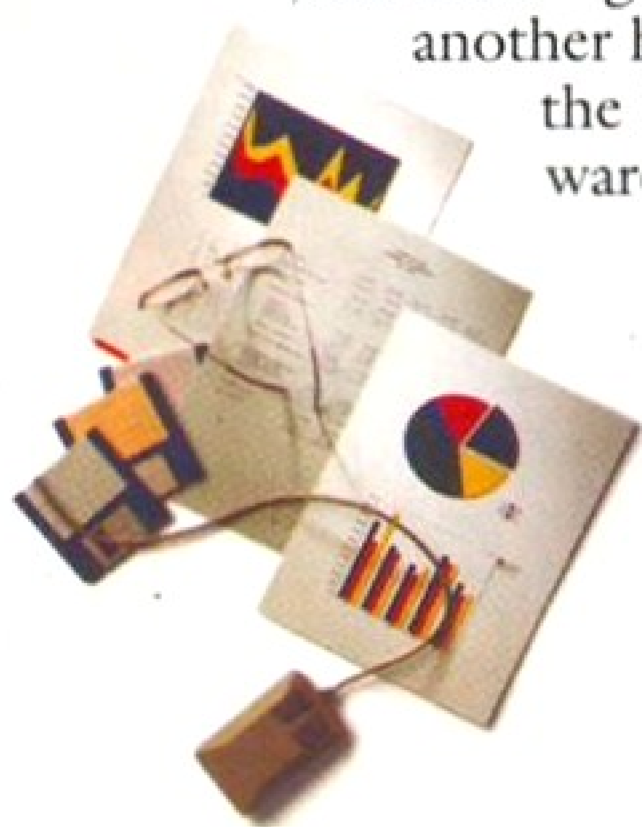
See all your plans come to perfection with Maxiplan4. This upgrade of Amiga's best-selling spreadsheet is more than an improvement, it's a real revelation. It's compatible with the new Workbench 2.0 as well as 1.3. To ensure extra speed, flexibility and a truly professional finish.

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Kindwords3 gives Amiga's most popular word processor a big boost. For a start, this new version is faster, far more powerful and fantastically friendly. Incorporating the incredible Human Interface Protocol™, it works harder for you. So you don't have to work so hard!

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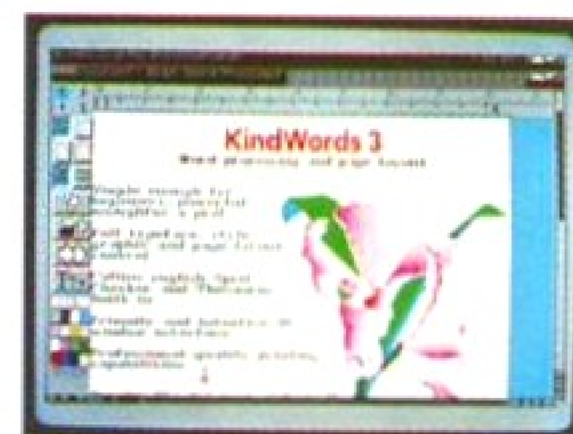
Get to grips with words and graphics instantly. Advantages include automatic text wraparound for pictures. From all graphic file formats of any colour or resolution. Up to 255 fonts per document are available, including high density printing fonts. There's also an expanded British Collins dictionary and thesaurus, on-line help, a WYSIWYG display... and much more. While a digital clock keeps track of time.

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Both upgrades require Amiga 500, 500+, 600, 600 HD, 1000, 2000 or 3000, Workbench 1.3 or 2.0, 1 MB RAM (additional memory recommended). Two Disk Drives or Hard Disk recommended.
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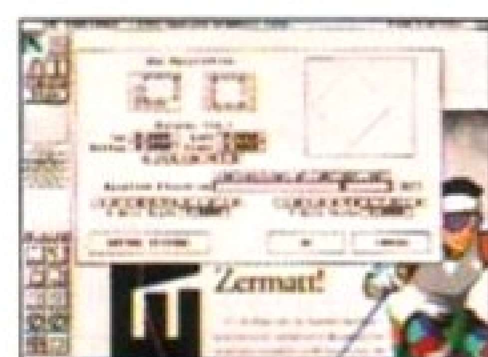
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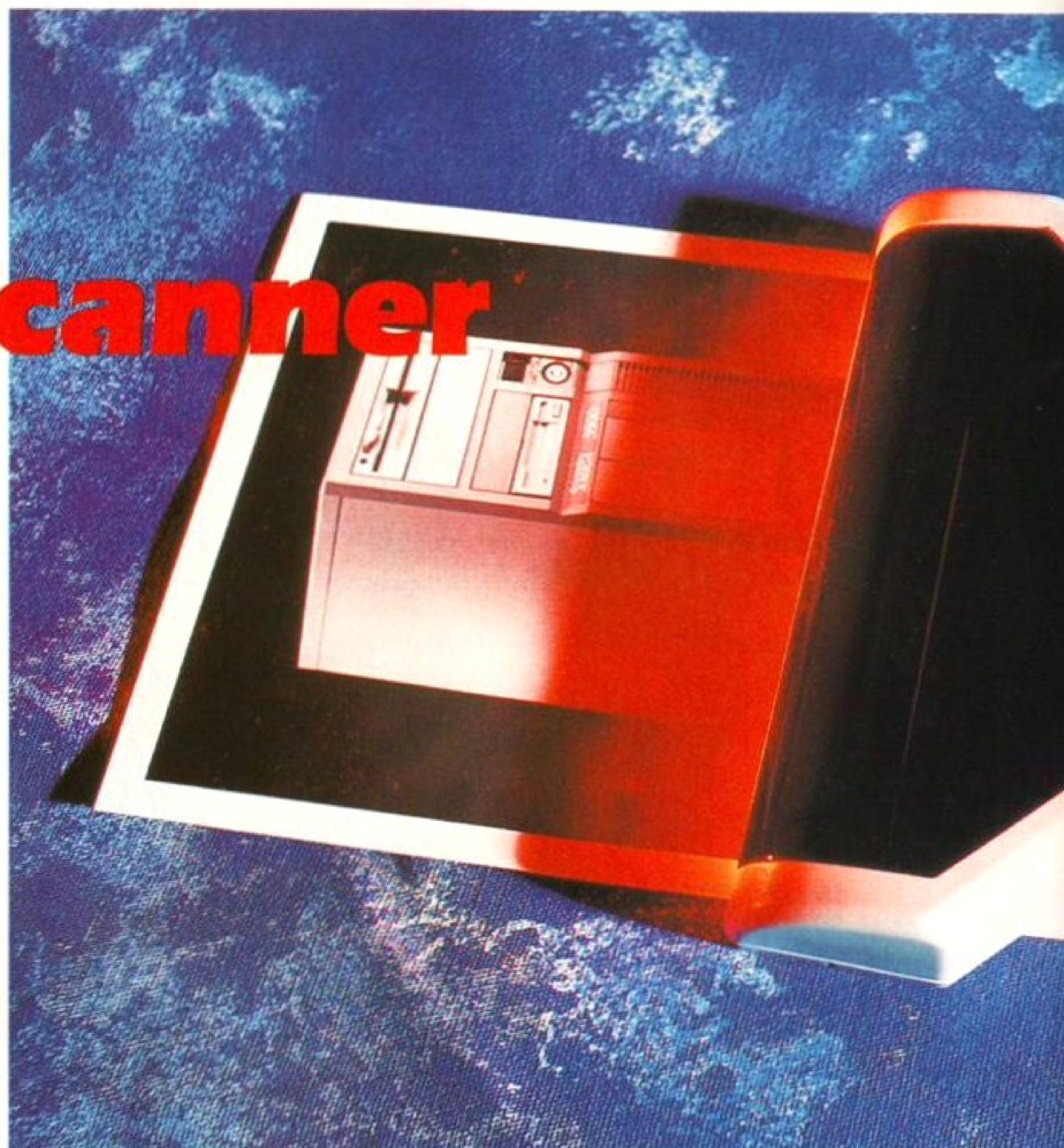
For additional information, demonstration disks, or brochures, visit your Amiga dealer or phone 010-331-49109995. Fax 010-331-47611746.

Minimum requirements: 1.5 MB of memory and two disk drives; Amiga KickStart and Amiga Workbench 1.3 or higher. All trademarks acknowledged. PE 17 4LF, United Kingdom. Allow three weeks for delivery.

With graphics as the flavour of the month, we decided to send **Asam Ahmad** to give us a full run-down (or across) on the latest hand-scanner. Here is his report.

Alfa Data Scanner

Mono hand scanner ■ £335 ■ Golden Image



The Alfa Data Scanner: full OCR combined with a reasonably smooth scan-response has to be weighed up against a quite substantial price.

SO WHAT'S SO special about this scanner? Well, at its hefty price-tag you'd expect something special: and yes with this package you get a hand-scanner capable of resolutions up to 400dpi (dots per inch), a copy of *MiGraph TouchUp* scanning and editing software; a copy of *Merge-It* to join-up scanned images, and the star of the show, a special version of *MiGraph OCR*, optical character recognition software, made for the Alfa Data scanner.

The scanner runs from an adaptor that connects to your parallel port. Unfortunately, there is no through-port, so you have to keep unplugging the scanner module and plugging in your printer (if you have a parallel printer). This can be a little annoying when you have a nightmare situation like mine – where there are cables galore behind your Amiga. Anyway, as well as the parallel port device, there is a power adaptor that has to be plugged into the mains to power to the scanner.

On the scanner there are a few twiddly bits to control how your scan will appear. There is a slider that enables you to select the resolution that you want to scan your image in at. This can be either 100, 200, 300 or 400dpi (dots per inch). When scanning, it is vital to bear in mind what the final picture is going to be used for. If you are scanning in an image to use on screen, there is no point in scanning at 400dpi, especially when you consider that a monitor is only capable of displaying around 65dpi. However if you plan to use a scan in a document or something that is to be printed out, it is best to choose a scan as close as possible to the resolution of your printer.

There is also a brightness wheel to control the saturation of the image, and a switch that controls the halftone resolution. This determines how big the halftone dot is, which fundamentally determines how coarse the image will appear. There are three halftone settings, and also a letter setting. The latter tells the scanner to ignore all shades, and send an image as a pure black-and-white scan. This is ideal for scanning text, or hand-drawn line-art because it produces a sharp image with no dithering. The last button on the scanner is the Start button which, as its name suggests, indicates when you are actually scanning.

The *TouchUp* software included in the package is pretty comprehensive. It has an abundance of tools for scanning and manipulating your image. Scanned images, despite the fact they are only mono, can take up quite a bit of memory, especially for a full-width 400dpi scan. So, it is advisable to have quite a bit of memory free. The minimum requirement is 3Mb, but if you are careful, and don't have too many windows open on Workbench and any background tasks, 2Mb might suffice.

To scan an image, you have to select the scan-resolution from the software and from the scanner. This means that you can select different resolutions on each, effectively using this ability to alter the image size on the Amiga. If for example, you set the software to 400dpi, and the scanner to 100dpi, the scanned image would be a quarter of the original. Setting software to 100dpi, and the scanner to 400dpi, the image would be four-times larger. You also have to select the scan length in order to determine the size of the image you want to scan.

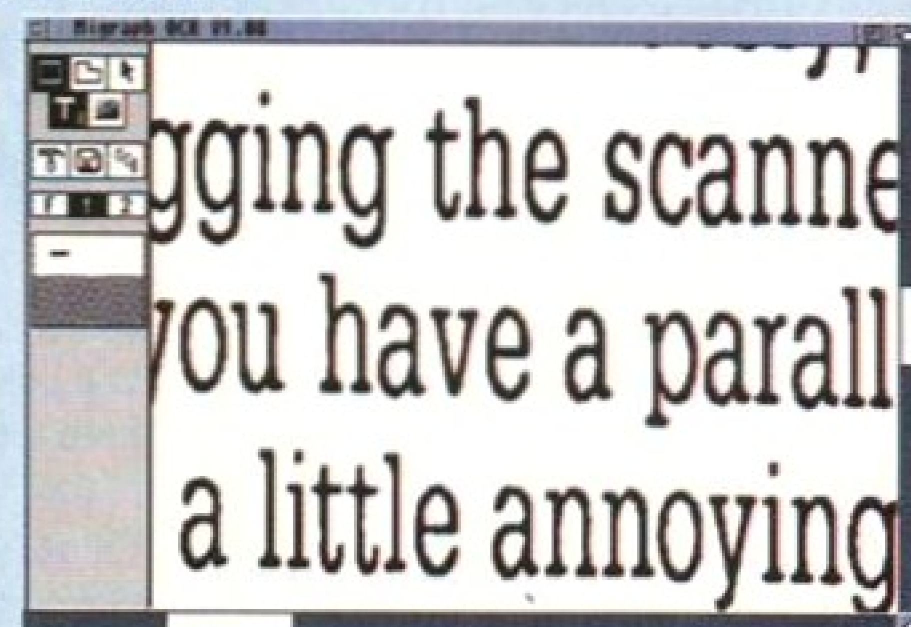
This done, it's just a case of moving the scanner over your image at a steady rate. The Alfa Data isn't as bad as some others because you don't have to move the head at a snail's pace for the Amiga to keep up. There is also a little, red LED on the unit that starts to flash if you start going too fast. If the light goes out however, it's time to start the scan again because you will have lost some data.

The other functions *TouchUp* provides are mainly to do with editing the picture and

The ALFA DATA SCANNER is available from Gasteiner Technologies 081-365 1151

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS TEXT?

so what's so special about this scanner? W ell from the price, you'd probably expect something special, and indeed with this package youget a hand scanner capable of resolutions up to 400dpi, a copy ofMiGraph TouchUp scanning and editing software, Merge-It, to ioin upscanned images, and the star of the show , a special version of MiGraphOCR, optical character recognition software, made for the Alfa Datascanner.The s canner its elf runs from an adaptor that conne@s to yourparallel port. Unfortunately , there is no through po@, so you have tokeep unplugging the scanner module and plugging in your printer(assuming you have a parallel printer) whenever you want to use it.This can be a little annoying when you have a nightmare situation likemine, where there are cables galore behind your Amiga and a right oldspaghetti jun@ion. Anyway , as well as the parallel po@ device, there isa power adaptor that has to be plugged into the mains and feeds into it,supplying pow er to the s canner .On the scanner you have a few twiddly bits to control how yourscan will appear. There is a slider that allows you to select theresolution that you want to scan you image in at. This can be either1 00 , 200 , 300 or 400dpi. When scanning it is vit@ to bear in mind whatthe final pi@ure is going to be used for. if you are scanning in an imageto use on sc7ggn . . t@@7@ i% nn nninf in %r%nninn fVo im%n@ in %t @nn @ni



The OCR software in action. After scanning in the raw words, it is time to translate it into ASCII text.



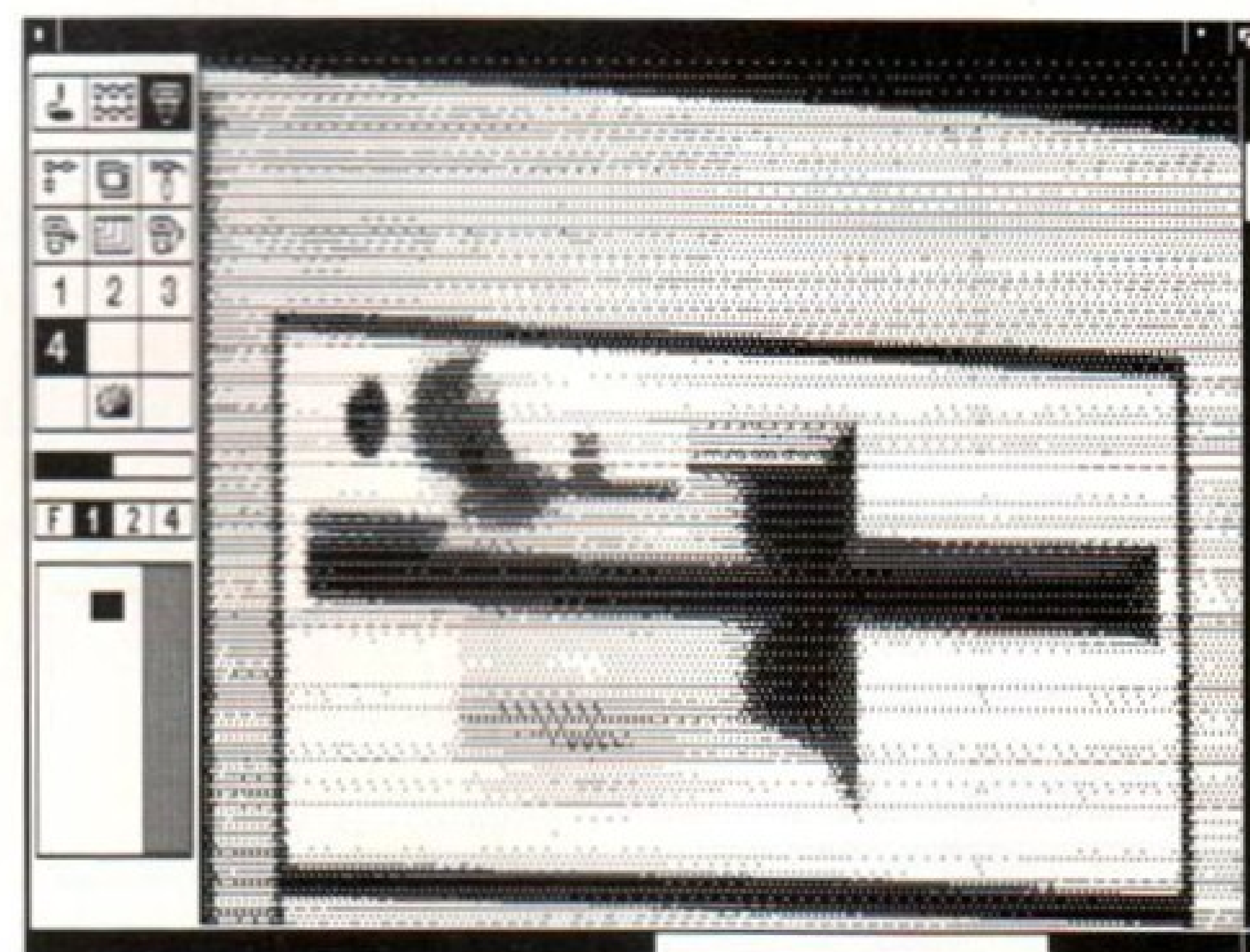
touching it up. There are brush facilities and various other tools to enhance the image. When saving the image you have the option to save it as a pure black-and-white image or, by some clever image processing, as a 16-colour image or as a 31 'apparent' colour image using a 2x2 picture cell. This is ideal for creating screen images. DTP fans can also save out as 24-bit IFF or as 8-bit TIFF, as well as a couple of other alien formats.

The problem with hand-scanners of course is that you are restricted to a scan width of around four inches. In order to overcome this limitation, the scanner is provided with *Merge-It* software which does exactly that. It will take two scanned images, and will try and join them up.

The program is very good at this and provides you with some fine positioning control to overlay the edges of the two scans together. Finally, it will save the newly formed image as one file.



The Amiga 3500, half scanned and printed directly at 400dpi, and half converted to a 31-greyscale image. As you can see, the quality is pretty good.



The *TouchUp* software enables you to... er touch up the pictures you scan in, and manipulate them so they look as good as possible.

The cherry on the cake is the OCR software. This has been specially written for Alfa Data so you can't take any old image and process it; all the data has to come directly from this scanner. In order for it to operate at its best, you have to set the scanner to 400dpi (the highest resolution) and into text mode so the image has no grey scales.

The software is very impressive in operation. It has some intelligent algorithms to relate scanned characters into actual text, and in the interactive mode it will ask you to define the characters it doesn't understand. It uses these definitions to help work out the rest of the words in the scan.

It can even learn from every scan, to build up its own little dictionary. After a few uses, this option really does come into its own and, in order to make the most of your investment, I would advise that you make good use of it.

I was quite pleased with the results that the scanner produced and, despite the high price (compared with most scanners at around £100) the programs that you get with it are of a very high quality and are very functional.

It is possible to scan in good images with very little hassle. The only real down-point (once you have got the money together that is) is that for the best results, you need to have at least 3Mb of memory, and preferably a fast processor, so that you don't have to move the scan-head terribly slowly to make sure the computer gets all the data.

All in all – and even considering the price – a very good package, and especially useful for DTP users that need to scan in pictures for flyers, for Amiga users that want to scan in pictures for graphics or whatever. If you can afford this scanner, then you should seriously consider going for it.

The 'text' on the left hand side is no normal text, it's actually what the *MiGraph* OCR software interpreted from the text in the first column. The original was printed out at 300dpi, using a 12pt font, rather than scanning the text straight from the magazine, using the 8pt Times font. All the text was worked out automatically by the software and , where it didn't know a character, it inserted an '@' symbol.

The smaller the text, the higher the resolution you have to scan at. The text on this page is output at 1,270dpi, so at 400dpi, the image would be fine. If however the same 8pt text was output at 300dpi, then a scan at 400dpi, would not provide sufficient accuracy for a good interpretation of the text.

IT'S NOT ALL HERE IN BLACK AND WHITE

In the main, a black-and-white image is made up of halftones to convey the illusion of different shades of grey. This works by using halftone cells (or dots). For example, if you have a halftone cell of 2x2 pixels, you have a maximum of up to four shades of grey, by filling in the dots in the cell, ranged from none to full. Therefore if you have a cell of 4x4 pixels, you have a 16-grey-scale image.

The trade-off here is that the larger the halftone cell, the coarser the image will appear and, despite the fact that you might have many apparent shades, you will have an image with a very detail level. It is best to think about this, and whether you need more detail or more shades, when considering the subject matter you are scanning.

The picture of the Amiga 3500 above was scanned at 400dpi, and processed by the *TouchUp* software. It was saved as a normal image, and also as an apparent 31-greyscale image. You can see the difference that the conversion from halftone cells to shades makes; the 31-grey version looks a lot smoother.

Alfa Data Scanner

SPEED ●●●
Not tremendously fast, but then again, you are playing with big images.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Good manuals for all the bits of software. All you need to know is here.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
Lots of features, especially with the OCR software and *MiGraph TouchUp*.

FEATURES ●●●●
The basics are reasonably easy to get the hang of, and it works well enough.

VALUE ●●●
The price is double most other scanners and, even taking the OCR into account, it's too high.



79%

Now the fun

fun School Specials

Three brand new programs from the makers of Fun School

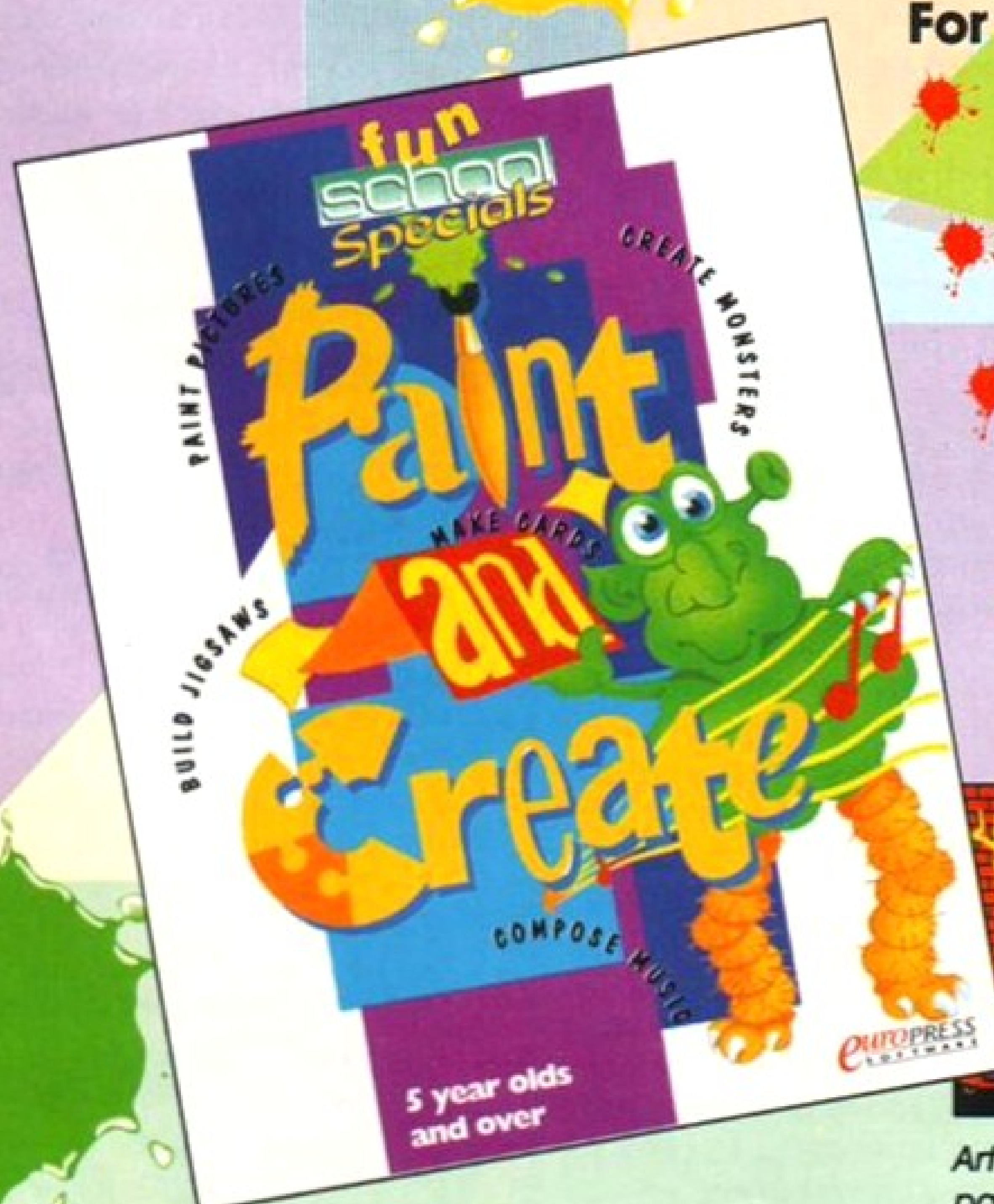
In response to consumer demand, a range of Fun School Specials has been developed to help children with specific areas of learning. Following the release of Fun School 4, parents and teachers have consistently requested products which focus on certain subjects in more depth – in particular spelling, maths and creativity skills.

The aim of the Fun School Specials is to complement children's school work. All the products comply fully with the National Curriculum syllabus.

Paint and Create

For five year olds and over

- **Paint and Create is designed to help children exercise and develop their creative talents.**
- **It consists of six entertaining activities, some with a practical bias, some which are pure fun.**
- **Programs within Paint and Create include Art Alive, Jigsaw, Music Maestro, Card Creator, Monster Maker and the Activity Menu (which allows access to all the other programs).**
- **Available for Amiga, PC and C64 cassette.**



ART ALIVE



Art Alive is an incredible art package specially designed for children – they can draw freehand or choose from a bank of pre-drawn pictures.

CARD CREATOR



Card Creator encourages children to design and produce their own eye-catching greetings cards for every occasion.

MUSIC MAESTRO



Let the music play! Using Music Maestro children can create their own band from a choice of players and make sweet music.

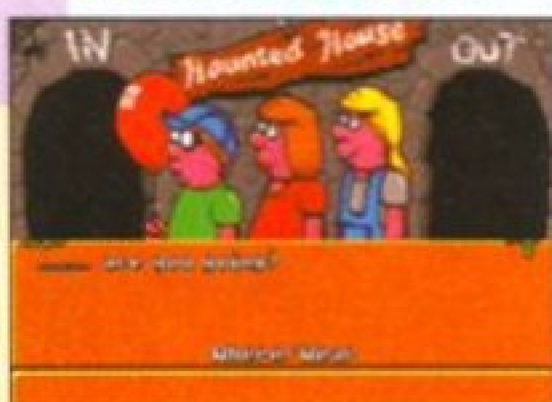
eally begins!

Spelling FAIR

For 7 to 13 year olds

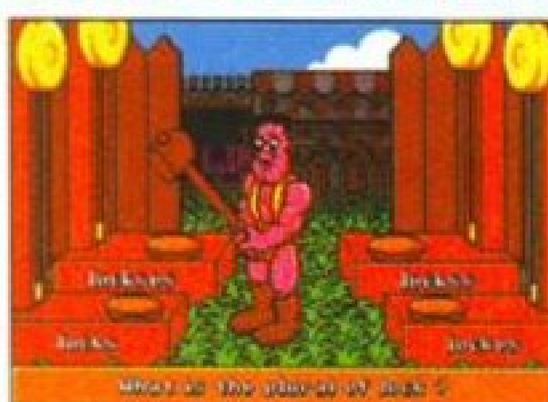
- A unique package designed to help children master basic spelling techniques.
- The six programs within the package are set in a colourful fairground and incorporate the essential "fun" element that has made the Fun School products so popular.
- Sixty levels of difficulty to suit children of all ages and abilities.
- The package incorporates a 3,000-word dictionary containing carefully-selected words which frequently cause children difficulty.
- Parents or teachers can easily create their own mini dictionary of words that require special attention.
- Special selection of words to cater for the needs of dyslexic children.
- Available for Amiga, PC and C64 cassette.

HAUNTED HOUSE



Haunted House helps extend a child's vocabulary, teaching all about homophones (their/there, caught/court etc).

TEST YOUR STRENGTH



Children use the hammer to bang the gong in Test Your Strength – and discover for themselves lots of unusual plurals.

CIRCUSWORDS

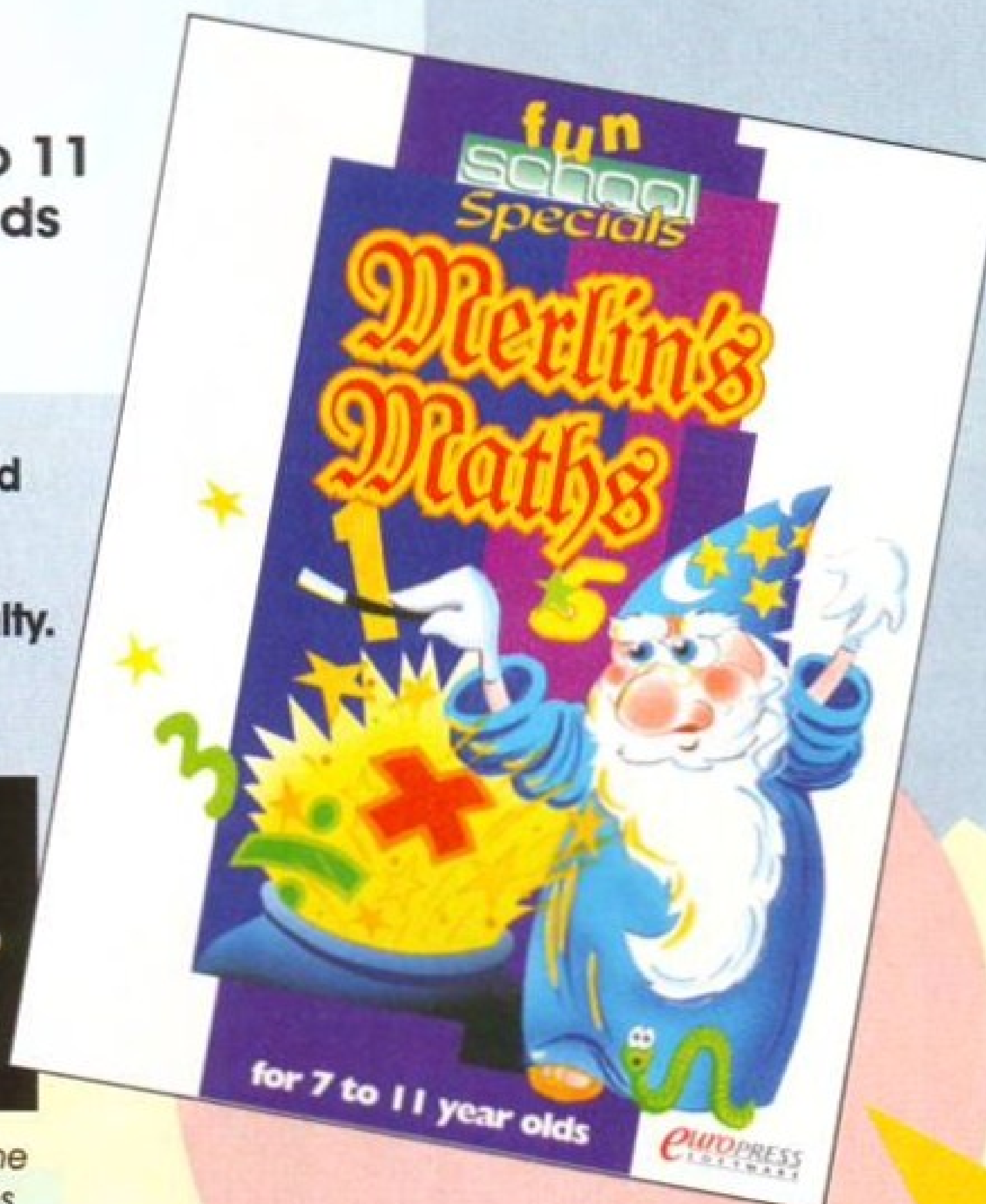


Circuswords: Children will love seeing the human cannonball come to life as they complete crosswords using both new and familiar words.

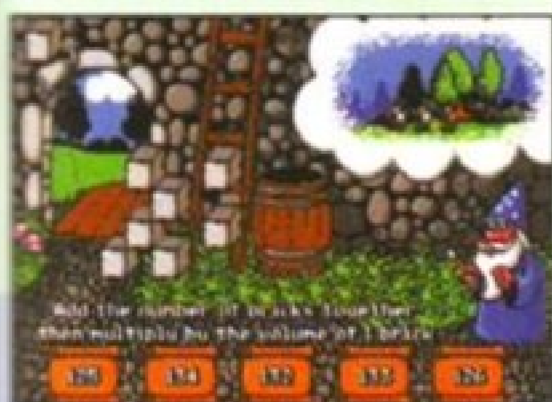
Merlin's Maths

For 7 to 11 year olds

- Merlin the Wizard guides the child through exercises in counting, decimals, fractions, adding, subtracting and volumes.
- Merlin's Maths combines the essentials of eye-catching graphics and rewarding sequences to keep children amused while they learn.
- Each program within Merlin's Maths has at least three levels of difficulty.
- Available for Amiga and PC.

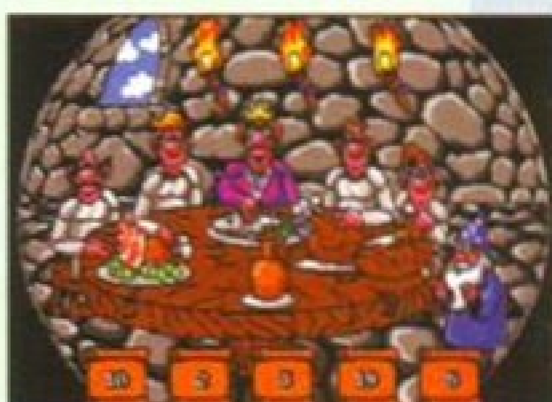


BROKEN BATTLEMENTS



Help Merlin build the castle wall by completing counting, adding and multiplication calculations in Broken Battlements.

CRYSTAL CONFERENCE



Crystal Conference: Get the sums right and watch the knights of the round table enjoy their banquet.

MERLIN'S MATHS



Merlin the wizard guides the child through the programs in Merlin's Maths.

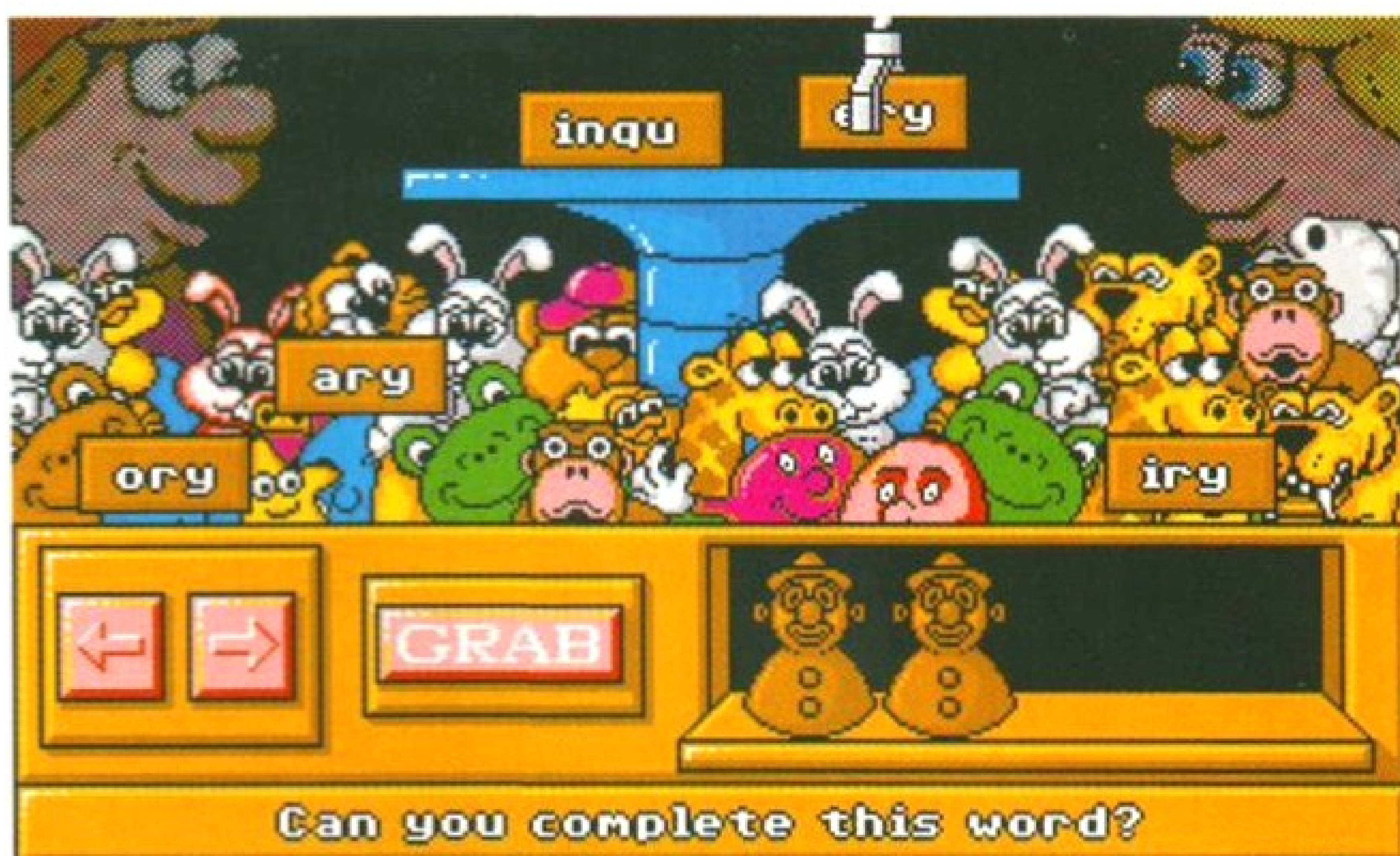
europress SOFTWARE

Europress Software Limited,
Europa House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP.
Tel: 0625 859333

Europress' acclaimed range of educational programs has recently been extended to include a fairground full of lexicographers. **Neil Jackson** puts his spelling checker to the test. Now was that 'i' before 'e'?

Spelling Fair

Spelling Fair ■ £29.99 ■ Europress



Another kind of word ending which causes problems for children is the Greek or Latin suffix. Here, a mechanical grabber demonstrates the way some words are built from a stem and a suffix.

ACCORDING TO ***THE*** *Daily Mail*, one in five pupils can't spell the word 'weather' and illiteracy is rife, even at university. It's a sorry state of affairs, and it's one that we can't expect the over-stressed education system to put right overnight. But if you're a parent, there is a way to boost your child's spelling ability without having to spend hours and hours acting as a personal tutor. Now we're not suggesting you opt out or cut corners with your offspring's education, but you can pass some of the donkey-work over to your Amiga.

Spelling Fair is made by the same team that created the *Fun School* range, and it's an easy way to help your children learn to spell. It consists of six main learning sections plus a dictionary and a spelling 'hot-word' list. Each section uses graphic displays and mouse-clicks to represent and alter the word being tested.

The first is Coconut Shy, where a row of coconuts is marked with letters. The pupils knock out the letters which aren't part of the word the clue is referring to. If they do it four times in a row they get an animated 'prize'. The coconut shy tests up to 12-letter words and each word usually has a couple of extra letters tacked on to the start or end.

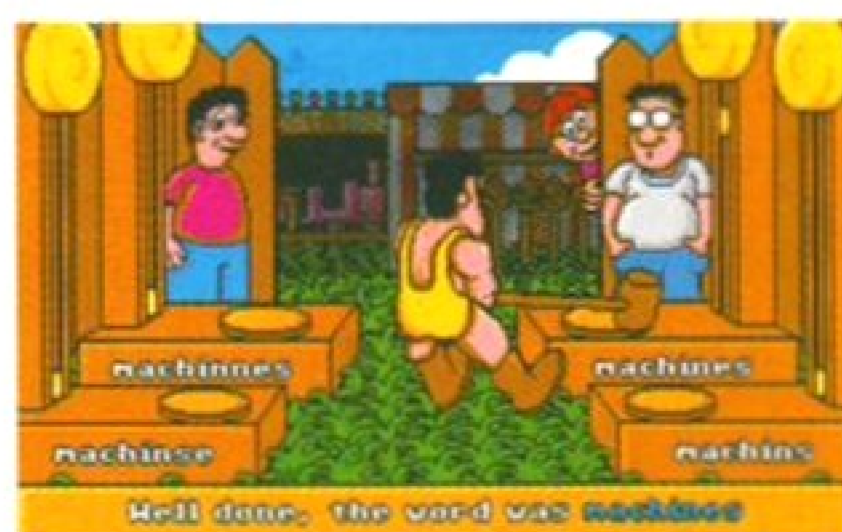
Next up is Test Your Strength which tests for correct plurals. Here the pupil must direct a man with a hammer to hit the pad marked with the correct word from four possible choices. Each time one is answered correctly, people pop their heads round the fence to watch. Get four right to win a round of applause.

Plurals often give kids a real hard time, so the Test Your Strength section gives four possible plural variations for each word tested. Only the correct answer rings the bell.

SPELLING FAIR is available from Europress 0625 859333

Simple word recognition is tested here in the coconut shy. All you have to do is knock off the letters which aren't part of the word.





Then it's the Mechanical Grab, a version of those annoying money-wasters which never quite manage to pick anything up. But in *Spelling Fair* it's where your child will pick up the correct use of word-endings. The stem of a word is displayed at the top of the screen and the pupil's job is to select the correct ending (like ion, tion, sion etc) that fits the stem. This is done by directing the grabber's hand to the correct ending and selecting 'GRAB'. The arm moves across the screen and drops down to pick up the word. A prize drops into the slot below if the pupil gets the word right. Get four right and a PacMan gobbles up all the prizes.

Haunted House is a test for commonly mis-chosen words like wear/where, it's/its, too/to/two and so on. A sentence is displayed, with the vital word missing. Clicking on the gap brings up the choices – the child has to type in the answer. Each time one is answered correctly, you can advance a place in the queue for the haunted-house ride. Get four right and a few ghosties and ghoulies appear.

In Circus Word a small, partially completed crossword appears. Moving the mouse over the squares displays a clue for the missing word. The child must click on the square, then type in a guess. Complete all the words in the crossword and you see the human cannonball fired from the cannon.

Finally, in Word Juggle, two clowns stand in the circus ring holding balls marked with letters. A clue appears below and the child has to swap the letters round to make up the word. Get the words right four times and a unicycling clown rides along carrying a banner marked 'well done'.

The remaining parts to *Spelling Fair* are intended for use by the parent or teacher, though the average kid won't take long to realise how to use these bits too. The dictionary section enables the parent to edit the word clues or add new words and clues to the 3,000 words already stored. More useful is the Spelling List section where parents can add lists of words they know their child is having difficulty with. These 'hot-words' then appear in the games in random order, forcing the child to learn by repeated encounters.

If your son or daughter is having trouble with words, is aged between seven and 13, and can be trusted to use your Amiga (without loading a shoot-em-up the minute your back is turned), then they could really benefit from *Spelling Fair*. Its approach, though a bit juvenile for a 13-year-old, does make sense right from the word go.

Europress have included a host of awkward and often-confused words which even had a few of the journalists here pausing for a moment's thought. Spelling Fair can help with dyslexia, it can teach children to think about suffixes and break words down into easy segments, and it can give you peace of mind, all at the same time. For 30 quid, it's a steal; if only schoolbooks and dinner-money came that cheaply too.

Spelling Fair

SPEED ●●●
Some of the sub-sections take around half a minute to load from disk.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
You don't really need any at all – the idea is to play as you learn.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
Simple point-and-click mouse interface makes it really easy.

FEATURES ●●●●
Plenty of variation in test styles, and room for customisation.

VALUE ●●●●
Indispensable if your young child has any difficulties with spelling.

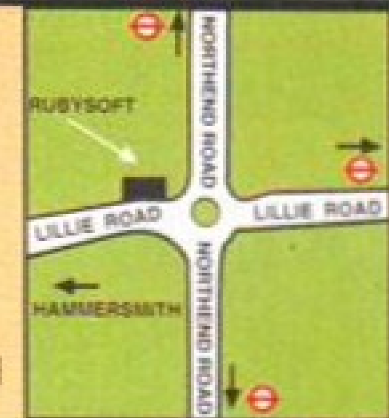


87%



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SW6 7SR, England
Tel: 071-381 8998
or: 071-610 1703
Fax: 071-610 1703

*Shop prices will differ from those advertised



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Lemmings Oh No! More Stand Alone	£17.99	£17.99
Links (Hard drive only)	N/A	£25.99
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Links Bountiful Datadisk	N/A	£13.99
Liverpool *	£17.99	£17.99
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* Please note titles asterisked may not be released at press date but will be despatched within 24 hours of release subject to availability. PLEASE TELEPHONE FOR ANY TITLES NOT SHOWN AS WE CANNOT SHOW ALL TITLES AVAILABLE. ALL TITLES CAN BE PUT ON BACK ORDER. REMEMBER WE NEVER DEBIT CREDIT CARDS FOR GOODS NOT DESPATCHED.

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*512K Upgrade for most 520 ST's	£49.95

* (Plug in solderless not suitable for STE. NB due to variation design a small minority of boards may need a little solder)

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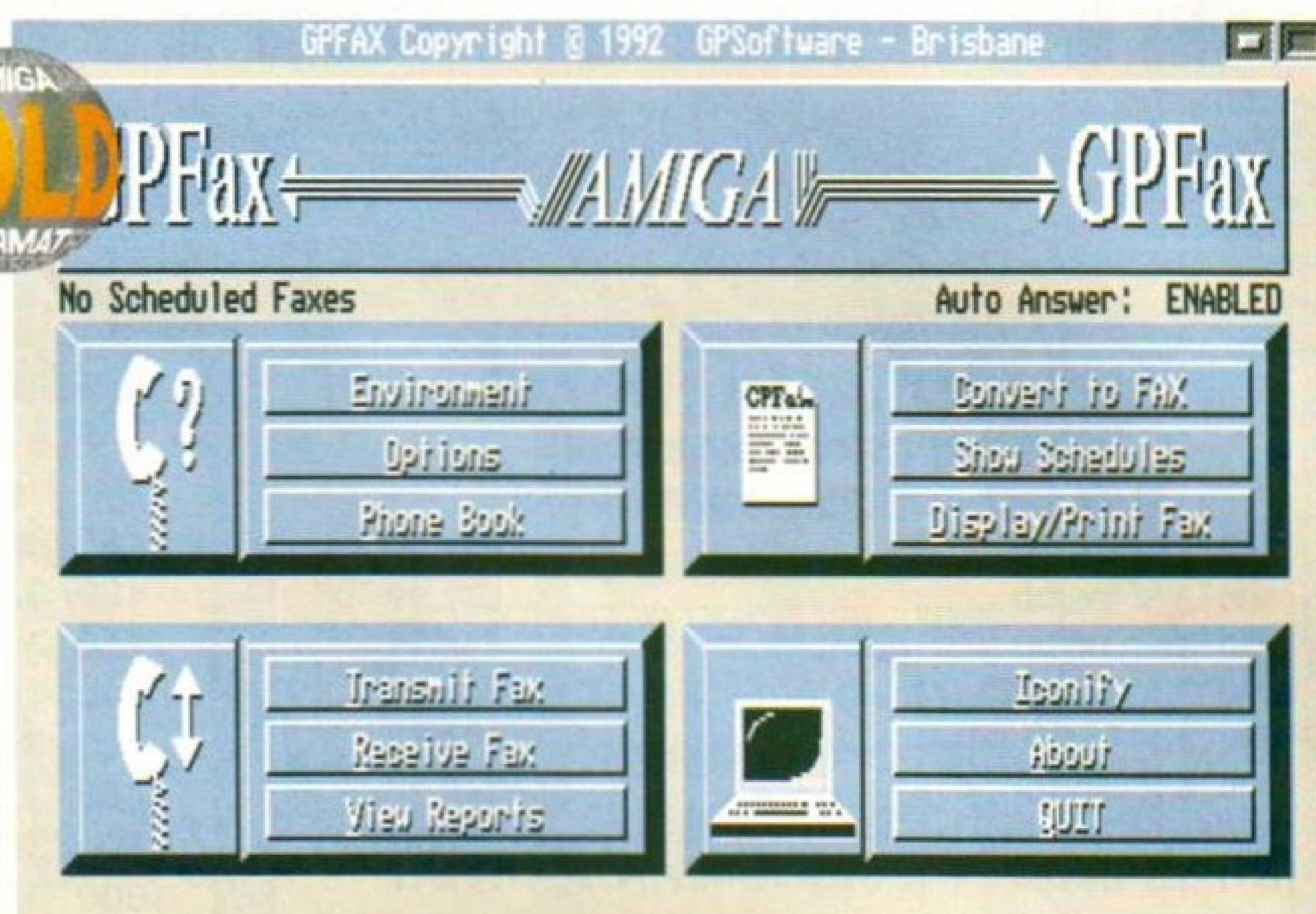
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It's not just big business types who need to get information quickly and accurately. Wouldn't it be great if you could send and receive faxes straight from your Amiga. **Asam Ahmad** does just that with some great new software...



This is the main control panel. Here you can call up the Viewer/Printer screen. You can also iconify *GPFax* to run in the background.

GPFax

Fax software ■ GP Ware ■ £39.99 (£29.99 if you buy a modem)

FIRST OFF, YOU can only use *GPFax* if you have a modem capable of understanding class-2 fax commands. I must admit though, I had my doubts about *GPFax*, having previously used some pretty unfriendly shareware fax software. How wrong I was.

GPFax has been written to fully conform to Workbench 2 standards (although fortunately it still works on 1.3 machines) and so it is extremely easy to set up and get going with. It comes with the new Commodore Installer program, which automatically installs all the program files into all the right places, so the way the program's operations are transparent to the user.

The program has two main ways of working: the first method enables you to produce faxes of a decent quality very quickly. If you have a text file that you want to send to somebody, you just tell *GPFax* to translate it into a fax image using any standard Amiga font. It will create all your text on the page and even enable you to add a header and a footer to your fax by specifying two standard IFF files.

This means you can create a logo in *DPaint*, and also a signature to act as a footer, and send your own personalised faxes. You can even import IFFs as part of the fax, to highlight a point in your text. If you select the Scale option from the Options panel, you can even resize your image up to the maximum size of the page, so pictures come out nice and clear. Once you have prepared your document you can preview it using a versatile View screen, to make sure everything is in order.

The second method is trickier, but it enables you to produce high quality faxes, in fact better than any normal fax machine can produce because the computer doesn't have 'noise'. By this I mean that the image is not a scanned image, but a computer-built image, which is perfect at fax resolution. You can of course transmit to any fax machine.

How it works is by a very clever preferences printer-driver module: 'gpfax.driver'. This is no normal Amiga driver though, this one automatically switches in whenever needed while *GPFax* is running.

It captures the PRT (output to form a fax image) so if you use a package, say *PageStream*, you can create a page using scaleable fonts and import graphics, layout a good-looking page to your heart's content, and simply print it via the preferences module. *GPFax* will capture the output and produce a fax file for later transmission. This method opens up endless possibilities because you can create a document in any package you choose, from a word processor to a CAD program, and then quickly fax it over the phone line.



Before transmitting and after receiving a fax you can view it using this View screen. There is also an option to print out a hard copy from here.



This sample is an actual printout from a fax that I sent from *GPFax*. The quality is, excellent... (better than the office jobbie).

Having created your fax, it is time to transmit it. *GPFax* comes with a very good phone book that enables you to enter names, numbers, and it even enables you to set the program up to fax literally hundreds of people (your phone bill, not mine) unattended. Unattended? Thankfully you are also provided with a logbook that shows you how everything went, and it will even retry numbers if it fails.

What about receiving faxes? Yes you can, unattended if you desire, and the quality of received faxes will usually be higher when printed out using your own printer. The resolution of a fax is 218x198 dpi. A 9-pin can go up to 240x216, so if you select 'Smoothing' when printing from *GPFax*, you can print your fax out on paper and the results will be quite impressive. Even better is that if you have Optical Character Recognition Software, such as *MiGraph OCR*, you can turn the text on the fax into copy for your word processor. Great.

Initially, I thought, OK who needs this, but this program really is useful. So much so that anybody that is thinking of buying a fax machine should consider that you can pick up a Supra FAXmodem V32bis for around £260 from First Choice plus this software for £30, and you have a fax capability superior to a standard fax machine. A great piece of software, the best at what it does.

GPFAX is available from First Choice Computers 0532 319444

GPFax

SPEED ●●●●
Good. It operates well, and with its iconify feature it can even run in the background.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
A good manual, which makes a change, describing all functions in depth. Well written.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
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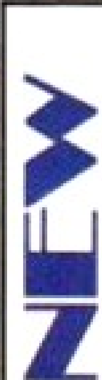
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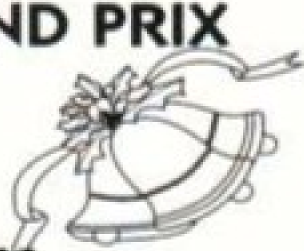
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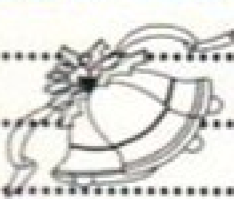
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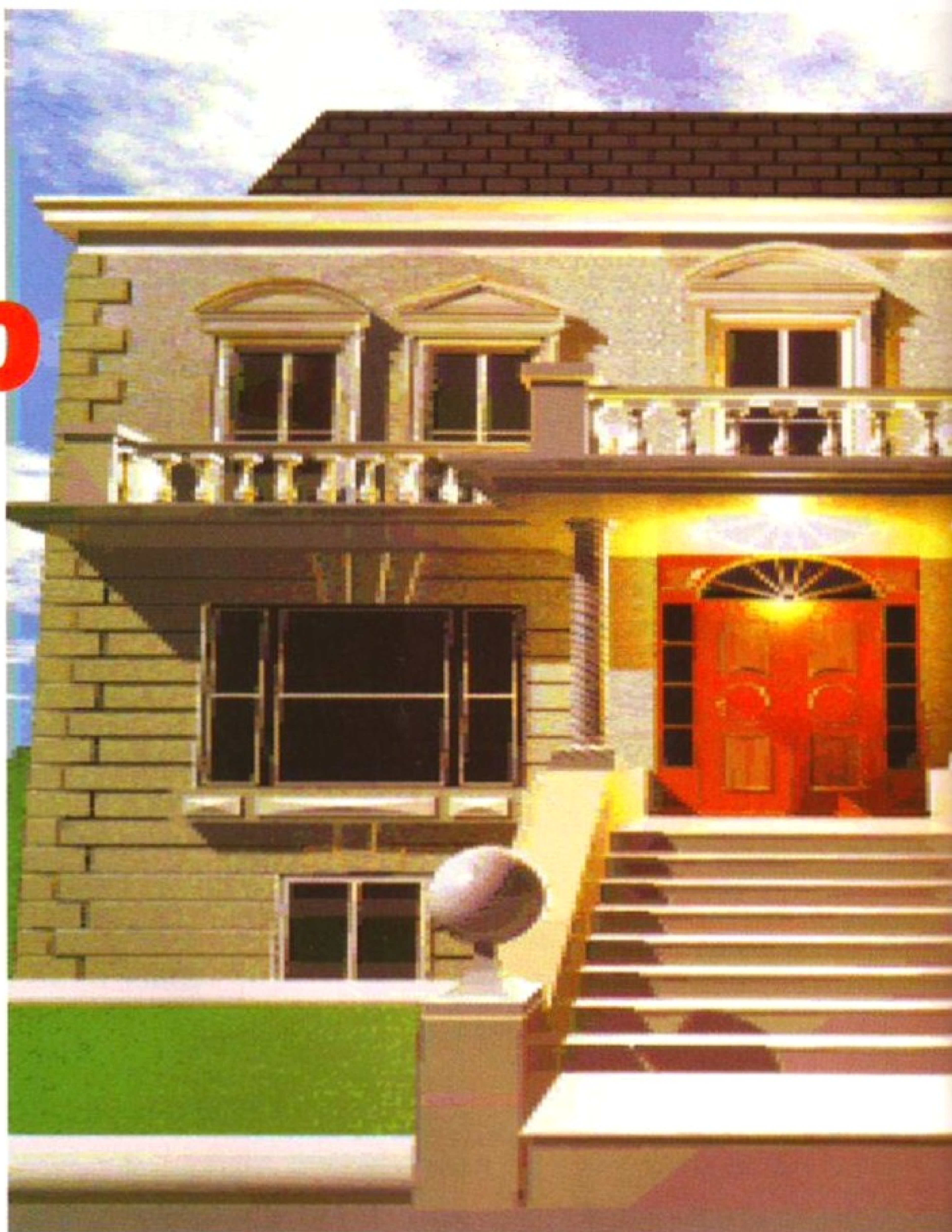
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Despite the availability of high-quality CAD systems, the Amiga has never been accepted as a serious contender in this market. Could all this change with this latest release? **Jason Holborn** writes.

X-CAD 2000

£129.95 ■ CAD Package ■ Digital Multimedia



Here's something that even *AutoCAD* can't do! If you need to visualise your 3D CAD image as it would appear in real life, *X-CAD* will enable you to output your drawings in a number of common ray-tracing package formats. This image was produced using nothing more than *X-CAD3000* and a copy of the *Imagine* ray-tracing program. *Imagine* is available separately from DML.

IN THESE DAYS of 486 PCs you'll still find Amigas being used for a range of professional applications, from desktop video to DTP and professional 24-bit graphics. But the Amiga has also been causing some serious waves in the CAD (Computer Aided Design) market, mainly thanks to one package – *X-CAD*.

This has been available in a number of incarnations for years, and has established itself among professional Amiga CAD converts. This will come as no surprise to those who appreciate the Amiga's impressive hardware specification – CAD applications require a machine that generates images made up of complex points and lines at high speed.

X-CAD enables engineers and designers to easily design and visualise anything from a cola can to printed circuit boards, and just about anything remotely mechanical. *XCAD* designs in a structured form. The image is manipulated internally as a series of points which are interpreted to form the image that you see on your Amiga's screen.

CAD systems usually require vast amounts of RAM and some form of processor accelerator, but not *X-CAD 2000*. It delivers serious CAD power to the average user. Considering most 'professional' CAD packages cost several thousand pounds, *X-CAD 2000* (and its big brother *X-CAD 3000*) is phenomenally good value for money. What's more it will run on a standard 1Mb Amiga with no extra hardware required – try that on a PC!

X-CAD 2000 arrives in a solid plastic casing with a comprehensive 300-page manual, four disks and a copy-protection dongle. Now, I hate dongles. OK, at least the program disks can be backed up as many times as you want, but none of these will work unless the dongle is connected to the joystick port. Due to its tiny size though, it's too easy to mislay this all-important part of the *X-CAD* package. DML should reconsider their copy protection policy – I could understand if it was a simple package, but it's so complex that few users could use *X-CAD* without a manual anyway. Its complexity is copy-protection enough.

Once the dongle is connected, a double click on the program icon brings *X-CAD* to life. After a bit of automated setting up, you're

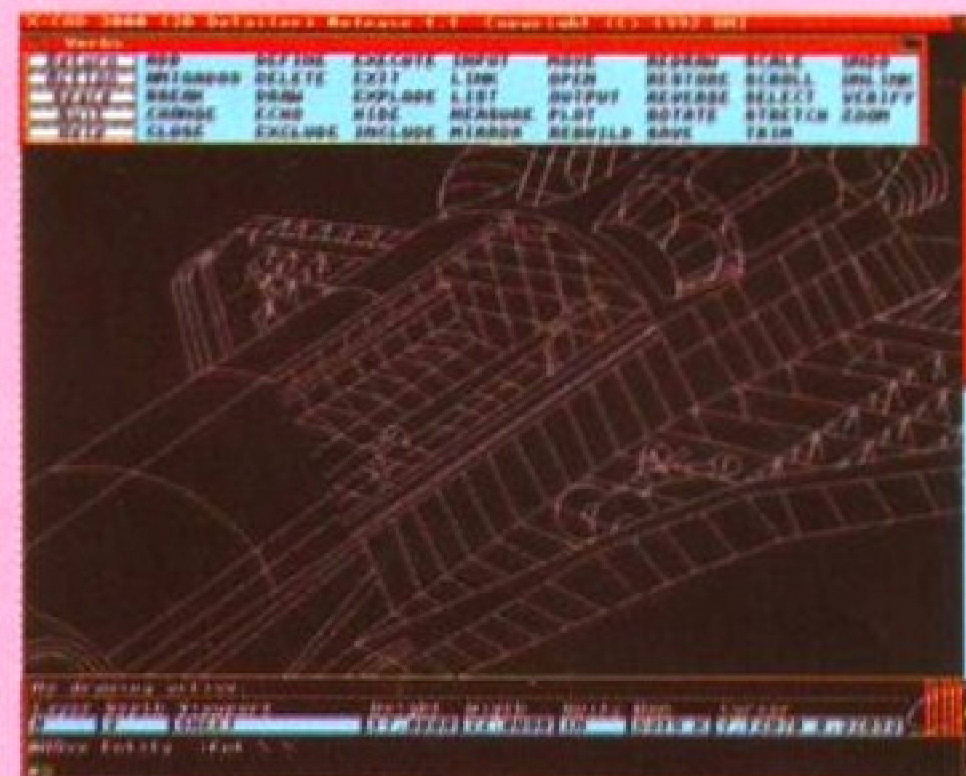
X-CAD 2000 is available from Digital Multimedia 081-977 1105

AND FOR PROS... X-CAD 3000

If your CAD needs are a little more demanding, then *X-CAD 3000* could well be for you. Requiring 2Mbs to run, *X-CAD 3000* is DML's answer to the *AutoCADs* of this world, and it is designed as a professional CAD system which can handle virtually any CAD-related task. It boasts the same 386 butt-kickin' speed of operation as its little brother, but adds an impressive array of extra features that undoubtedly puts *X-CAD* into the major league.

For starters, *X-CAD 3000* includes a far more professional and very polished user interface that is an absolute joy to use. The enhancements aren't just cosmetic though – it not only runs faster than its little brother, it includes an impressive array of extra draughting commands and functions. Many of the existing *X-CAD* commands have been enhanced too – while *X-CAD 2000* can handle only 256 layers, *X-CAD 3000* supports a staggering 100 million layers (I challenge anyone to use them all!). The 3D module is far more powerful and includes well over 1,000 command combinations.

X-CAD 3000 is a seriously impressive piece of software that leaves so-called industry heavyweights like *AutoCAD* standing. Although *X-CAD* has already established itself among a small band of CAD converts, DML have an uphill struggle on their hands if *X-CAD* is to steal the throne from *AutoCAD*. The essential ingredients to make this happen are already there – both *X-CAD* and the Amiga itself can run rings around even the most capable PCs, but what is needed right now is a very strong marketing offensive from both DML and Commodore to get the CAD market to accept a machine that is still seen as nothing more than a toy for the kids. If DML get this right, *X-CAD* could be the Amiga's CAD ace card.



***X-CAD 3000* incorporates a far better user interface and a specification that leaves even *AutoCAD* standing.**

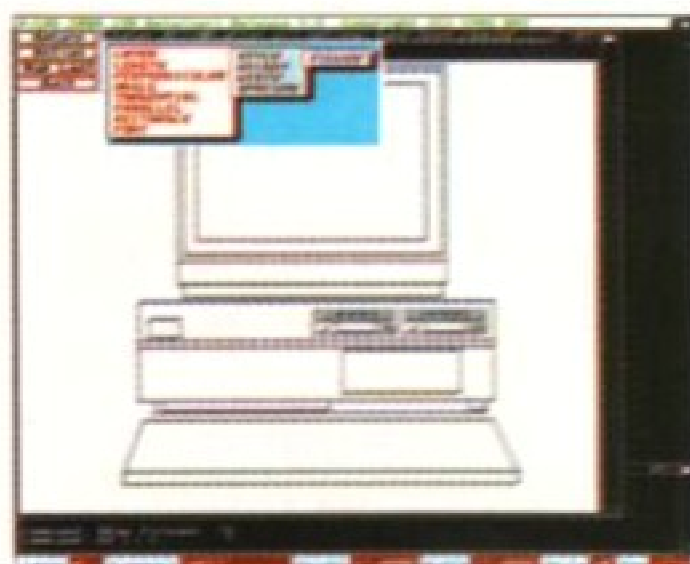


presented with a blank worksheet and a small command window. Those unfamiliar with CAD packages may feel a little daunted at this point – although many of the operations can be accessed via the pull-down menus, it is predominantly command-based. That is, to get *X-CAD* to do anything, you must enter a BASIC-like command complete with all the necessary parameters, for example: #DRAW CIRCLE DIAMETER 16 :Loc XLOCK MID x1 MID x2'. This takes some getting used to, but soon becomes second nature.

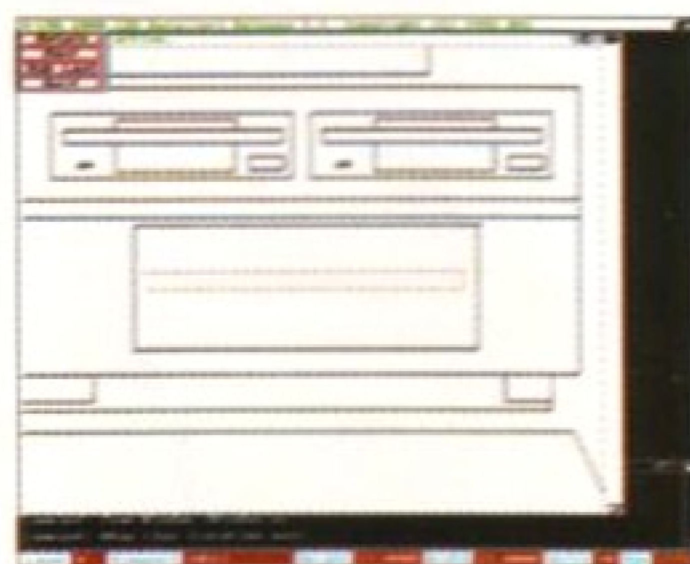
X-CAD 2000 offers a comprehensive range of drawing tools including the usual line, circle, arc, ellipse, spline, point, cross-hatch and polygon. it also offers a number of powerful text facilities which enable fonts to be scaled, rotated and messed about with to your heart's content.

One important aspect of any CAD system is its ability to split a drawing into a number of discrete layers. This is handy when working with complex drawings because it enables you to isolate sections of the drawing you wish to view, even if those areas are hidden behind other layers. *X-CAD 2000* gives you 256 of these layers to play with, which should prove more than enough for even the most demanding of semi-professional CAD applications.

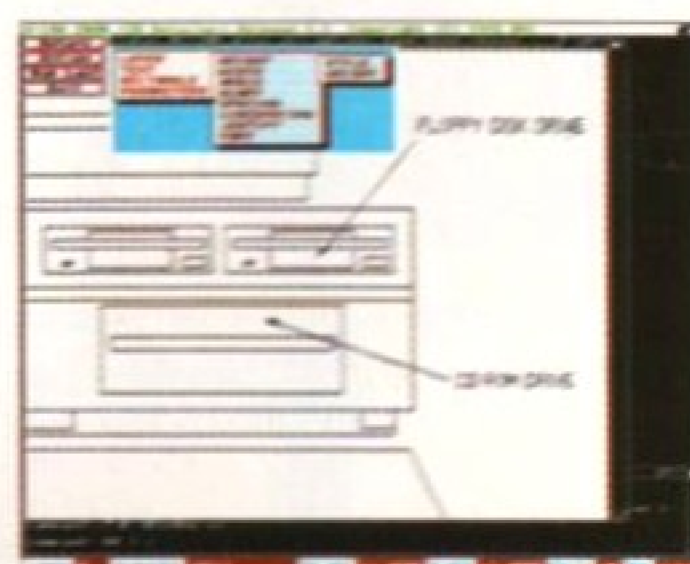
STEP BY STEP CAD



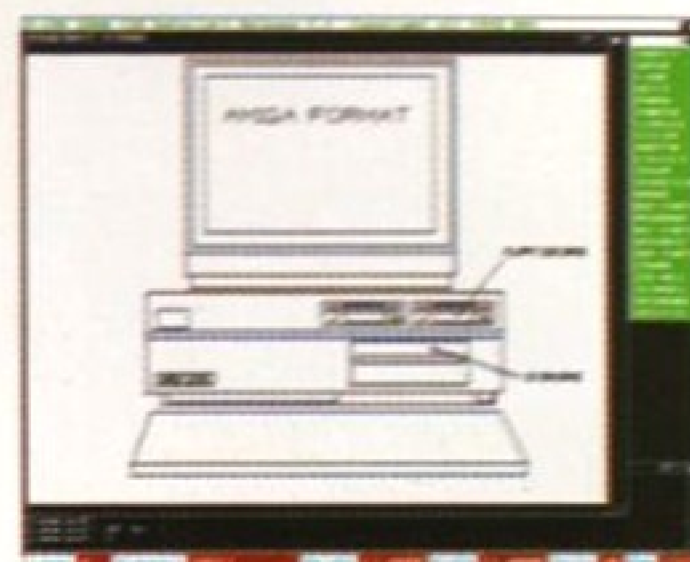
To draw a CAD image (here we've decided to draw an Amiga 2000) you must start off by drawing the outline and then add basic details. Even if the lines are not perfectly matched up, this can be corrected later.



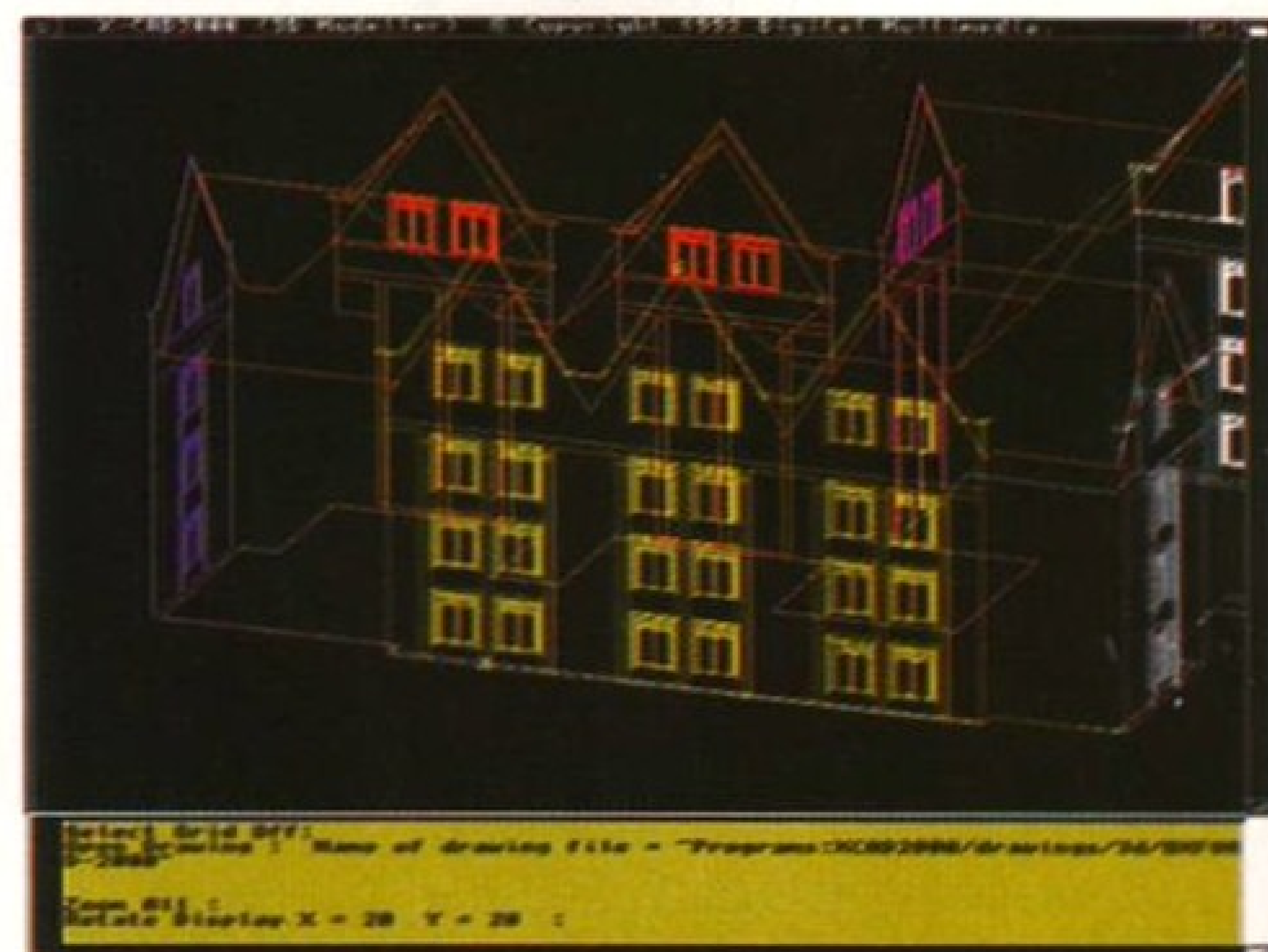
For finer details such as the disk drives and CD-ROM, we can zoom in on our drawing without losing any detail. Points and lines that we drew in the first stage can now be touched-up, and complex details added. The twin disk drives were drawn by first drawing one drive and then using the *X-CAD* 'Copy Entity' tool to copy the section of drawing to produce a second exact copy.



Once all of the finer details of our A2000 have been completed, we can then make the drawing a little bit more understandable by adding in some pointers and text; for that professional-looking touch.



Here's our drawing in all of its structured glory. OK, it's nothing to write home about, but if you can get this far then you'll already have gleaned a good idea of how CAD programs such as *X-CAD2000* work.



The 3D modeller enables you to convert your flat, 2D CAD drawings to full 3D. Once the object is complete, you can move around it easily, viewing it from whatever angle you may so desire.

One addition is direct support for AutoDesk's *AutoCAD* DXF files – the industry-standard file format for CAD drawings. This enables you to transfer files from any CAD package that supports the DXF standard. It also comes with a number of extra utilities which enable *X-CAD* drawings to be converted to *Imagine*, *Aegis Draw 2000* and *Sculpt* format.

X-CAD also enables you to take your CAD images into the third dimension. Using a separate 3D module, your drawings can be pieced together to form 3D drawings which can be viewed at any angle.

This helps you to visualise 3D objects with the resolution of a CAD system, but with the power of a solid modelling program. Each face must be constructed as a separate CAD drawing. Once all faces are complete, they are loaded into the 3D module and positioned to form a solid object.

Once you start to use *X-CAD* you realise it offers so much more than just a comprehensive set of drawing tools – it's also a very rapid piece of software. Even on a 68000-based Amiga running at 7.14 MHz, it blows away PC-based competitors such as *AutoCAD* running on 386-based PCs (the 386 being the equivalent of a 68030!). Run *X-CAD* on a 25MHz A3000 and it really starts to cook. The sort of performance that can be gained from this sort of setup is enough to reduce even a 486-based PC owner to tears! The difference in redraw speeds may not be immediately noticeable, but you'll soon start to appreciate it when working on larger drawings.

The only gripe I have is its user interface. Because it was written to run on a 1.3-based Amiga, the various windows and requesters can look odd when running under Workbench 2.04. This is a problem with *X-CAD 2000* only though – *X-CAD 3000* boasts a professional interface that looks good under both recent releases of the Amiga's operating system. One thing that can't be criticised is its power – it is without doubt the most powerful CAD package available for the Amiga bar none. No other package comes close.

X-CAD 2000

SPEED ●●●●●
Even on a standard Amiga, *X-CAD* runs faster than *AutoCAD* running on a '386-based PC!

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Every command and function is simply explained which makes it a joy to use.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
If you've never used a CAD system, *X-CAD* can be daunting, but the manual is very good

FEATURES ●●●●
Now that it directly supports DXF files, there's very little that it can't do.

VALUE ●●●●
Considering PC-based CAD systems can cost £1,000 or more, *X-CAD* is very good value.



88%

Two years on from the original release of AMOS, have Europress launched the definitive version? **Jason Holborn** finds out why this is the best piece of software we've ever clapped eyes on.



AMOS Professional

Programming Language ■ £69.95 ■ Europress Software

WHEN EUROPRESS LAUNCHED *AMOS* in 1990, little did we know the effect it would have on Amiga programming. For the first time, even the greenest of beginners could tap into the Amiga's custom circuitry to produce anything from simple demos to arcade games. Since then, Europress have enhanced and extended *AMOS* products with *AMOS 3D*, the *AMOS Compiler* and *Easy AMOS*, a cut-down version of *AMOS* for beginners.

Now, getting back to the source of this success, they've launched a vastly enhanced version that promises to deliver even more programming power, enabling just about anyone to push the Amiga to its limits without taking a degree course in Assembler language programming. Many of the *AMOS* accessories have been rewritten in an attempt to bring a more uniform, flexible and professional feel to the *AMOS* programming environment

AMOS Professional
£69.95 from Europress Software, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. 0625 859333

Apart from the flashy packaging, the first thing you will notice about *AMOS Professional* is the increase in the number of disks bundled with the system.

The original release came on three disks, but *AMOS Pro* now uses six, although it will still run on a standard 1Mb floppy-based Amiga. Not all three disks are needed to use it to its fullest, though. There are two Applications disks which contain demonstration programs; a Tutorials disk, another Examples disk plus the *AMOS* System and Accessories disks.

Once you've installed *AMOS Pro*, a double click on its icon brings it to life. Time for another shock – gone is the bland user interface and in its place comes a swish-looking frontend that makes *AMOS Pro* a more flexible system. Many of the operations which were previously only accessible through *AMOS*' obscure gadgets system can now be accessed via an extensive range of pull-down menus. You can now also edit several source files simultaneously, enabling you to cut, copy and paste between them without having to revert to the rather quirky 'Load Other' option.

The enhancements don't just stop at cosmetic changes though. *AMOS Pro* also offers impressive new commands and functions covering a number of existing and brand new areas of *AMOS* programming. Many limitations of the original have been addressed – you can now take direct control of your printer, send escape codes to it to change font styles and other printing functions. *AMOS*' program control constructs have been improved too, with the addition of an ELSE-IF clause. Surprisingly though, there's still no support for a CASE construct, although the new ELSE-IF clause can be used as a quirky alternative.

Those of you wanting to incorporate IFF ANIM format animations will be pleased to know *AMOS* now provides direct support for this too. Simply by loading the animation file into RAM using the FRAME LOAD command, it can then be played at a full 25 frames per second (that's faster than *DPaint*!) using



AMOS Professional isn't just a damned good games programming language – it can also be used to write applications such as an address book program like this.

ACCESSORIES UNLIMITED

One criticism levelled at the original release of *AMOS* was the rather poor quality of its accessories, the utilities used to draw sprites and bobs, build up banks of sampled sounds and draw game maps, etc. Although the language itself was polished to the point that it positively sparkled, the *AMOS* accessories were generally of poor quality. Building upon the accessories bundled with Easy *AMOS*, Europress have addressed this criticism by rewriting virtually all of the *AMOS* accessories so that they look and perform as well as the language itself.

The Sprite Editor in particular is a vast improvement over the previous release. It allows you to design sprites and bobs with up to 64 colours, flip them, rotate them and generally mess about with them. If you don't want to draw them using the Editor's limited range of drawing options, you can use a dedicated paint package such as *DPaint* and then load the image into the Sprite Editor and cut them out as sprites. You can also test your animated bobs and sprites using the animation option. This presents you with a view not dissimilar to a roll of film. Simply by clicking on the bobs in sequence and setting the playback speed, the Sprite Editor will preview the animation for you. Another couple of new utilities for *AMOS* users (although *Easy AMOS* users have had them for months now) are the Sample Bank Maker and Disk utilities which enable you to build up a bank of sampled sounds and perform house keeping chores on disks. Although the latter is no *Directory Opus*, it's very handy to have this tool on tap if you're programming on a floppy-based system.



the FRAME PLAY command. Alternatively, these two steps can be performed in one go using the IFF ANIM command. Unfortunately, using this command creates problems if you intend to use Blitter Objects on the same screen – to avoid this use Sprites instead.

AMOS Pro **also** offers a number of enhancements to the sound system. For starters, you're no longer restricted to just AMOS-Music format soundtracks – *AMOS Pro* now provides direct support for not only *SoundTracker* modules, but MED tunes with full MIDI data send. If you've got MIDI synthesisers and drum machines linked to your machine, you can now write music for your games and demos that will take advantage of these.

The major addition to the *AMOS* command set is its all-new Interface command set which enables you to easily build up complex and attractive screen displays consisting of slide bars, gadgets and requesters. What's more, using the included Resource Editor accessory, you can design these gadgets in a program like *DPaint*, cut them out and use them within your *AMOS* programs with ease. *AMOS Pro*'s interface system now runs under interrupt and uses its own command set which handles monitoring and reacting to gadget selections. All you need do is read these gadgets at regular intervals and the *AMOS* Interface language does the rest. The Interface language is the most complex aspect of *AMOS Pro* – with over 100 commands and functions; it's not the sort of thing you're going to learn to use overnight. But once you've got it sussed, it's something you'll never forget.

Another welcome addition is direct support for William Hawe's *ARexx* language, now an integral part of the Amiga's operating system under Workbench 2.04. *ARexx* support enables your *AMOS* programs to control (and be controlled by) other external *ARexx* 'hosts' using a series of simple *AMOS* commands.

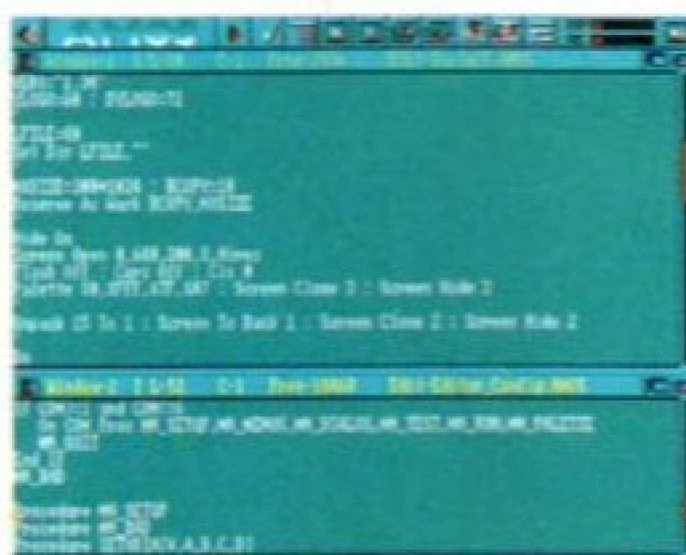
The possibilities for *ARexx* support in *AMOS* programs are astounding. Providing the software and hardware both support *ARexx*, there's no reason why *AMOS Pro* couldn't be used to code anything from simple frontends for multi-program environments, to complete multimedia systems consisting of CD-quality sound and music, realtime laser disk video, and just about anything else that can be tacked on to the back of a multimedia system.

The original *AMOS* was breathtaking, but this is even better. Now that Europress have recoded the *AMOS* accessories to give them a more uniformed look and feel, *AMOS* feels more like the professional development system it truly is. The new enhanced user-interface is a gem, and the extra facilities offered take the standards of *AMOS* coding to new levels of excellence. It's now so polished and powerful that it's virtually perfect. The only omission from *AMOS Pro* is support for the enhanced chipset, although I'm sure Europress will correct this when the rumoured 'AA' chipset finally becomes available later this year.

AMOS always used to be treated as an oddity among professional programmers, but even the pros would be stupid to ignore this release. Although it still can't handle *Intuition*-based coding without reverting to complex library calls, *AMOS*' support for *ARexx* and its new, Interface, language make it ideal, not only for writing high-speed games and demos, but for any application. *AMOS* has come of age and the result is the most powerful and accessible programming language available to the average Amiga user. *AMOS Pro* is one product every Amiga user should own.

THE AMOS SYSTEM

There's more to the new-look AMOS *Professional* than some pretty, cosmetic changes. The system has been re-examined and brought up to date with some major enhancements to the way the whole kit-n-kaboodle works. Vast improvements have been made to nearly every aspect. So let's have a more detailed look...



The heart of *AMOS* is the *AMOS* Interpreter which is used to type in, edit and run your programs. *AMOS Professional*'s editor is a very attractive looking affair that can edit multiple source files simultaneously. It's certainly a vast improvement over the original *AMOS* Editor.



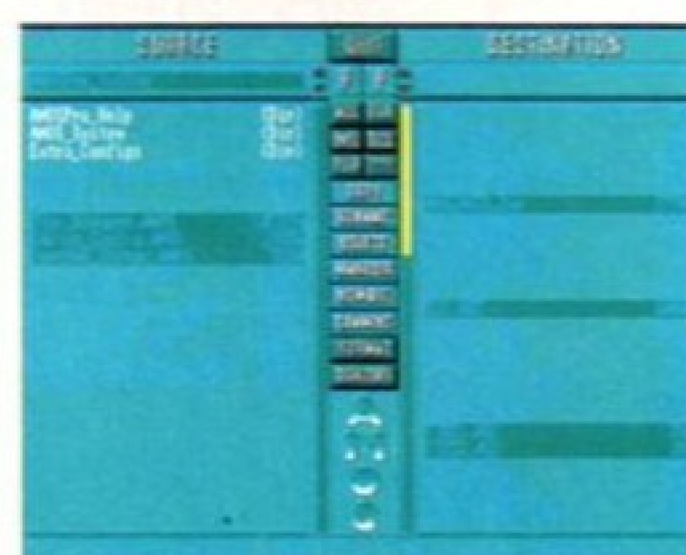
Gone is Aaron Fothergill's Sprite Editor, and in its place is a very posh affair written by the father of *AMOS*, Francois Lionet. It bears more than a striking resemblance to the *Easy AMOS* Sprite Editor, the *AMOS Pro* Sprite Editor is a very powerful beast that will even enable you to build up animations. Once again, it's a vast improvement over the original.



Another utility borrowed from *Easy AMOS* is the *AMOS Pro* Sample Bank Maker utility which, as the name suggests, enables you to pull together a number of separate sampled sounds into an *AMOS* sample bank to use at your merest whim later.



New to the *AMOS* system is a Resource Editor which enables you to build up a bank of icons and gadgets for use with *AMOS Pro*'s Interface commands. All you need to do is to draw all your icons in a package such as *DPaint* and then cut them out using this tool ready for use within your *AMOS* programs.



If your disks start to get a little full, then the *AMOS Pro* Disk utility can be used from within *AMOS* to perform all those Directory Opus-like house keeping chores. All with not a single Amiga-DOS command in sight.

AMOS Professional

SPEED	●●●●●
Faster than a speeding bullet. Ideal for coding anything, from games to serious applications.	
DOCUMENTATION	●●●●●
Written by Mel Croucher, the *AMOS* Pro manual is a vast improvement on the original.	
ACCESSIBILITY	●●●●
You won't write a mega game straightaway, but *AMOS* is still beautifully straightforward.	
FEATURES	●●●●●
No other Amiga programming language even comes close!	
VALUE	●●●●●
£70 may sound like a lot of money, but *AMOS* is still cheap when compared to the competition.	



97%



ACTI
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CARTRIDGE IS

NOW WITH A MASS
IN ROM OFFERING
MK I

JUST LOOK AT THE UNMATCHED RANGE OF FEATURES

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NEW **BURST NIBBLER.** Now this super disk copier program is built into Action Replay Mk III. Just imagine a superfast, efficient disk copier program at the press of a key - no more waiting.

- **SAVE PICTURES AND MUSIC TO DISK**
Pictures and sound samples can be saved to disk. Files are saved directly in IFF format suitable for use with all the major graphic and music packages. Samples are displayed as screen waveform.

NEW **PAL or NTSC MODES SELECTABLE** - Useful for removing ugly borders when using NTSC software. (Works only with newer Agnus chips).

- **SLOW MOTION MODE**
Now you can slow down the action to your own pace. Easily adjustable from full speed to 20% speed. Ideal to help you through the tricky parts!

NEW **MANY MORE INSTANT CLI COMMANDS** - like Rename, Relabel, Copy, etc.

- **RESTART THE PROGRAM**
Simply press any key and the program will continue where you left off.

- **FULL STATUS REPORTING**
At the press of a key now you can view the Machine Status, including Fast Ram, Chip Ram, RamDisk, Drive Status, etc.

- **POWERFUL PICTURE EDITOR**
Now you can manipulate and search for screens throughout memory. Over 50 commands to edit the picture plus unique on screen status "overlay" shows all the information you could ever need to work on screens. No other product comes close to offering such dynamic screen handling of frozen programs!!

NEW **JOYSTICK HANDLER** - allows the user to select Joystick instead of Keypresses - very useful for many keyboard programs.

- **MUSIC SOUND TRACKER**
With Sound Tracker you can find the complete music in programs, demos,etc. and save them to disk. Saves in format suitable for most track player programs. Works with loads of programs!!

- **AUTOFIRE MANAGER**
From the Action Replay III preference screen you can now set up autofire from 0 to 100%. Just imagine continuous fire power? Joystick 1 and 2 are set separately for that extra advantage!

NEW **IMPROVED RAM EXPANSION SUPPORT.** Now many more external Ram Expansions will work with all Action Replay III commands.

- **DOS COMMANDS**
Now you have a selection of DOS commands available at all times - DIR, FORMAT, COPY, DEVICE, etc.

NEW **FILE REQUESTOR** - if you enter a command without a filename, then a file requestor is displayed.

- **DISK COPY**
Disk Copy at the press of a button - faster than Dos Copy. No need to load Workbench - available at all times.

- **BOOT SELECTOR**
Either DF0 or DF1 can be selected as the boot drive when working with Amiga Dos disks. Very useful to be able to boot from your external drive.

NEW **PLUS IMPROVED DEBUGGER COMMANDS** - including Mem Watch Points and Trace.

- **DISKCODER**
With the new "Diskcoder" option you can now 'tag' your disks with a unique code that will prevent the disk from being loaded by anyone else. "Tagged" disks will only reload when you enter the code. Very useful for security.

ON REPLAY KIII

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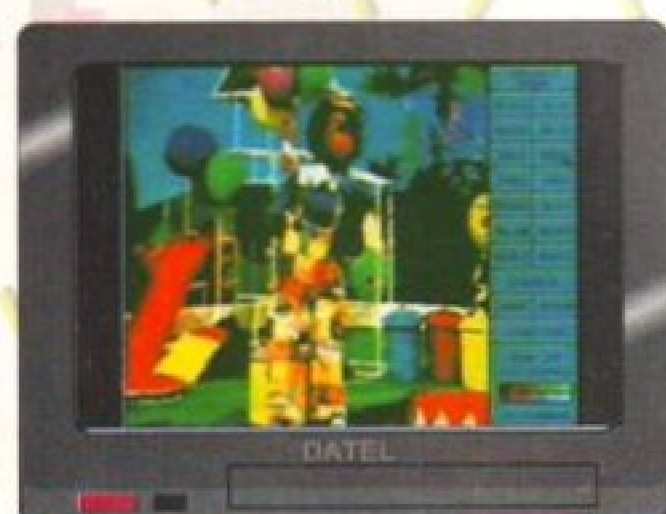






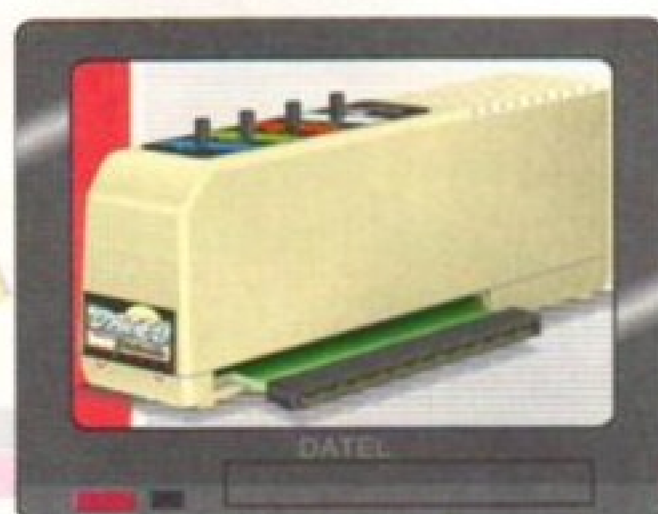
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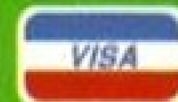
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If you want it, grab it!

Grabbing images from video is easy, but what is the right tool for the job, or budget. **Phil South** looks over some old friends and new trends.

ONCE YOU'VE GOT used to working *DPaint* (turn to page 29 if not) but once in a while you need to get something from the real world into your Amiga. The best way to siphon off a bit of reality into the memory of your Amiga is a video digitiser. Digitisers have been around for a long time and once you get an Amiga it's not long before you're dying to get digitising. What with video cameras being so (relatively) cheap , it's easy to get access to image grabbing and treatment hardware which only six or seven years ago would have cost you a packet to put together.

Once a picture has been grabbed into the Amiga it can be used in a DTP program or the same as any other graphic in your own C or AMOS programs. Or you can load it into an image-treatment program like Black Belt's *Image Master* for the application of special effects like morphing. Once you have a video source and a digitiser you're not a photographer, you're a 'computographer'.

So you may have a rough idea of what you want from a digitiser, but here's a rough idea of what you need to be a one-man digitising solution: a video source: a black-and-white or colour video camera, or a video recorder; computer and digitiser: for grabbing the pics, and with that of course you get the software.

There are, though, many options within this small list of tools. Like do you need a colour or black and white video camera, black and white digitiser or frame grabber, or a colour video splitter, or do you need a professional framestore? Obviously everyone would like the best, but what do you need? Let's reduce it to basics.

Basically there are three ways that you can get an image from the real world into an IFF file on the Amiga screen: mono, three-pass colour or real time. Mono digitisers are what you call framegrabbers, because they scan the in-coming image from the video source very rapidly, and can grab a frame on the fly. Three pass systems are colour based, although the source video has to be a still frame. Lastly, framestores are real-time systems, which have a chunk of video memory in them. The TV image is frozen by the framestore circuitry, and then the image is grabbed by the normal three-pass method.

In order to grab in colour, either the video image has to be still, or your digitiser has to have a framestore. The reason for this is that each of the three components of light (red, green and blue) need to be grabbed separately and then combined. If you don't want to shell out for one of the more expensive framestore type digitisers, you have to have a video with a reliable Pause mode. Colour splitters make this easy from colour cameras, or else you have to use a black and white camera with colour filters for each pass. (See the Tech Talk box-out).

Grabbing everything that comes on telly and storing it up on a pile of floppies might appeal to you, but what use can you put all these images to? Well the pictures you've grabbed are in IFF format in some form or another, so they can be pasted into any Amiga program which accepts IFF, which is most of them. DTP is the favourite here, because you can combine your IFF grabs with text, for pages that look rather special. OK, so you might not want to make a book about your holiday video, but how about a local football fanzine, or a radio controlled-model magazine? A video of an event can be grabbed and used as illustration for a piece on it in the magazine.

Once you've got a grab you can alter the file format to make it compatible with another computer. The Amiga uses IFF ILBM format, but other computers prefer GIF, TIFF or Degas formats. Using an image-manipulation program like ASDG's *Art Department Professional 2*, you can process the files to any format you like, even port it to a Targa 24-bit card on a PC. The one exception in this digitiser round-up which doesn't produce native IFF files is the VLab kit. This uses a very different format called YUV, although conversion to IFF formats, even 24-bit, is a very simple process using the software.

But rather than alter the file in a technical sense, how about altering it in an aesthetic way, but using treatments. Black Belt's *Image Master* is one of the perfect tools for that, but if you want to get into that territory you'll have to have a fat wallet for extra memory, especially for 24-bit files! So, let's look at what's available for the the majority of users...

JARGON BUSTERS

CHROMINANCE: the colour in a video picture. Also called Chroma.

COMPUTOGRAPHY: video and computer-based photography.

LUMINANCE: the light portion of the video image, the light levels which give you different shades on screen. Also called Luma.

RGB: shorthand for Red, Green, Blue: the components of light.

SPLITTER: a device for splitting a video image, or images, into red, green and blue image components electronically rather than with the use of a black-and-white camera and filters.

YUV: a mixture of Chroma and Luma used in a composite video picture.

COPYRIGHT

Grabbing from a video you've made yourself (such as a holiday film) is fine, because you own the copyright on it. But grabbing from commercial video or TV is copyright material, and you have to have permission for it. For example, we have permission to use images from *Akira* for illustrating this article, but we don't have permission to copy the whole movie. Copyright law is a complex area; but, as a rule of thumb – if you didn't create it yourself, you should look for permission to use it. No permission = no use.

TECH TALK

Most of the digitisers reviewed here use the parallel port for zipping the images from the video-in port to the Amiga. The parallel port is quicker because bits of information travel side-by-side rather than one at a time as with the serial port.

Some, though, like the VIDI machines plug into the external drive port or the joystick port to draw power or sync from the Amiga. Some plug into the expansion port on an A500, so are useless to A600 users. They will need to use the parallel port route. Others, like the DCTV and ColourPic Plus, use the RGB port too, usually with a pass-through for the monitor signal.

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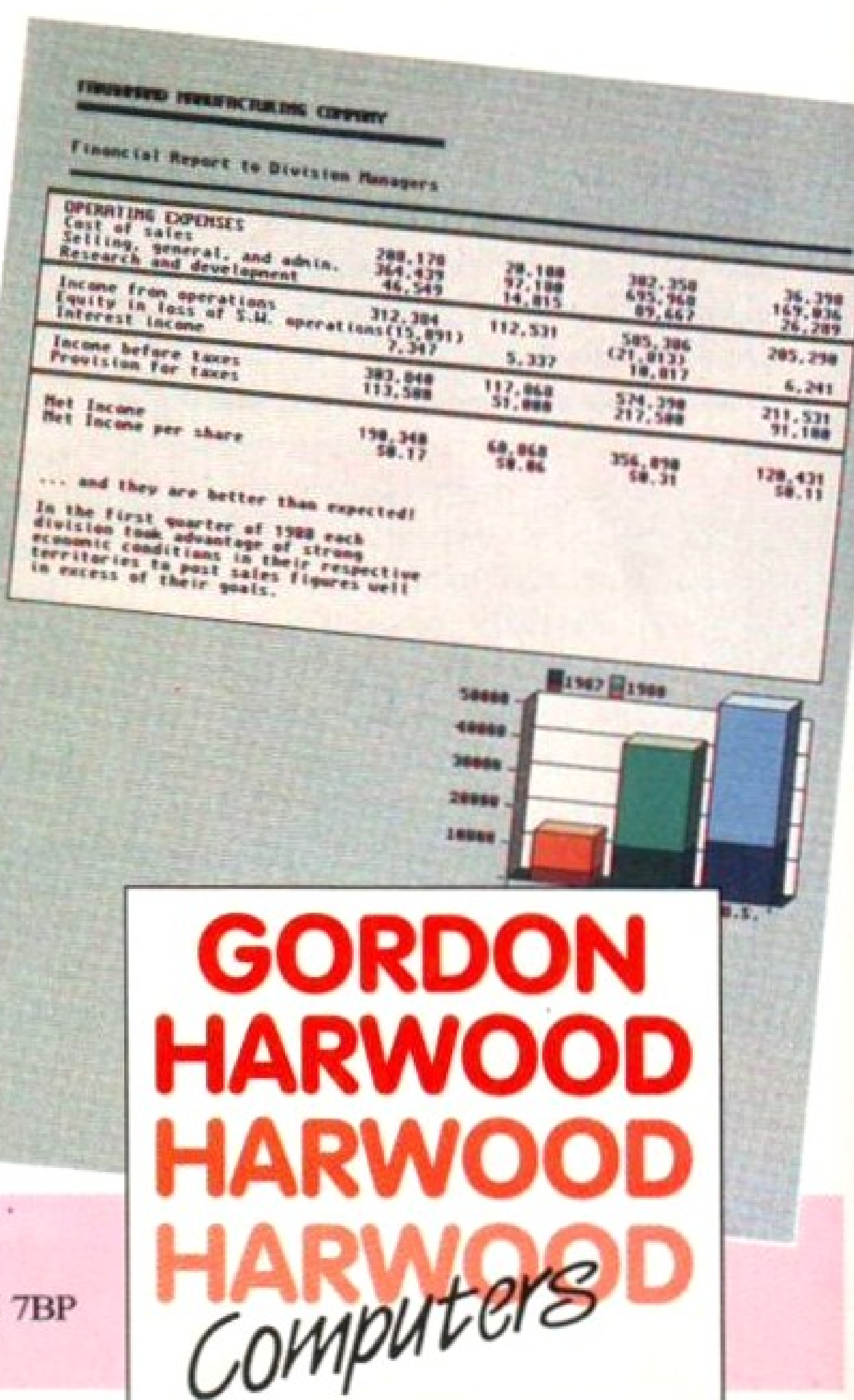
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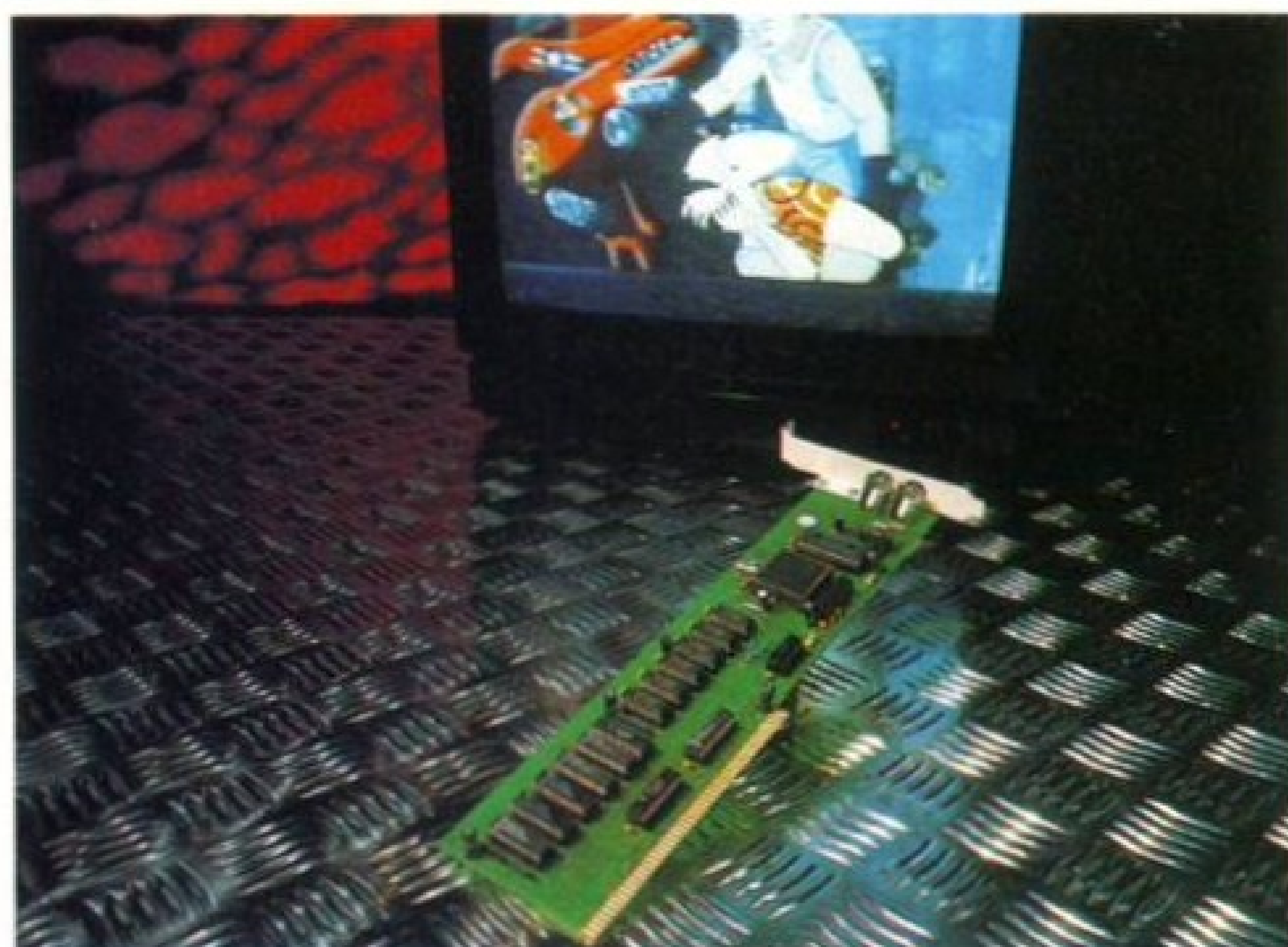


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A slim Zorro card with two inputs, switchable through software. The card is slightly shorter than other cards, so it needs care when fitting.



The quality of the grabs you get with VLab is excellent. Once the picture has been grabbed, it can be converted to any Amiga resolution, even 24-bit like this example.

VLab

Amiga Centre Scotland ■ £299

Not something you hear a lot about, which is a real shame as it's one of the most useful devices for digitising on the Amiga. It's a slim Zorro card for Amiga 1500/2000/3000 and once installed in any slot, it has two selectable composite inputs poking out of the back of the Amiga.

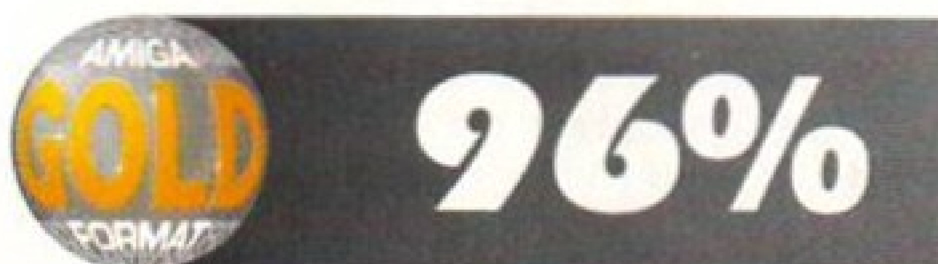
VLab takes the video line-in, and the images are digitised in YUV format (combined Chrominance and Luminance) and, although these files are not 24-bit, they can be converted by the software into 24-bit with minimal loss of resolution. The unit is really a small, cheap frame buffer and, although it does its job very well, it doesn't (like most of the other units which use 24-bit) take up a pile of memory to do it. Totally mind-numbingly efficient are the words for it.

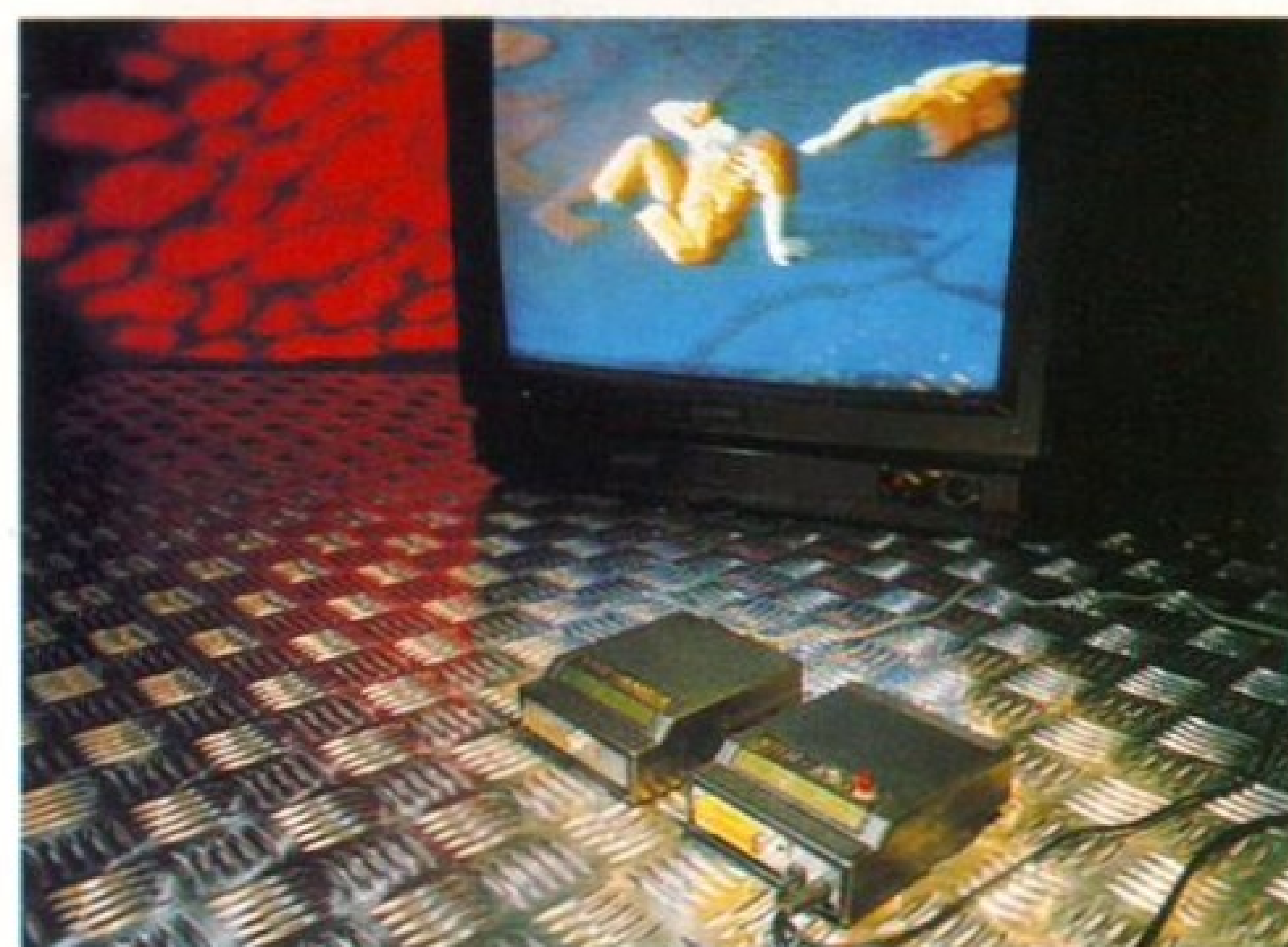
The quality can be seen for what it really is if you also have a Harlequin installed, because the image can be sent in full 24-bit colour directly to the board. The 24-bit image can be saved to disk with very little degradation of quality, and it's is all very simple and fast. The Amiga resolutions are also available with very sharp HAM down to two-colour being available, dithered or un-dithered. There are also modes for 64 and 256 colours: this means that you can easily convert these pictures to other formats for different computers.

The software is uncluttered and easy to use. it's based on a number of windows on the screen. A new screen can be opened to display the Amiga versions of the YUV pictures, or they can be seen in a low grade, dithered two-colour version in windows of their own.

Obviously, a fast processor speeds up the times it takes to save, load, and convert pictures, but the times for these operations are not too prohibitive without the extra muscle. Candidly, of the digitisers I tested, this was the one which gave me the most pleasure, best results and least hassle to test and use. Although it's cheaper and has fewer features than the externally mounted ColourPic, it does the job it's designed for very well. You do have to lace up another TV monitor to the video to see what it is you're actually grabbing. Future versions of this hardware should have an external feed to monitor the input going through the unit, rather than two inputs, which I found frankly redundant.

Despite its simplicity it is an excellent unit, and well worth every penny.





Although the hardware looks a little kludgy, it is in fact very sophisticated and, for the price, it turns out some very superior results.



The picture quality is very high, especially when the RGB pictures are combined using the 'Slow' algorithm.

VIDI Complete Colour Solution

Rombo ■ £179

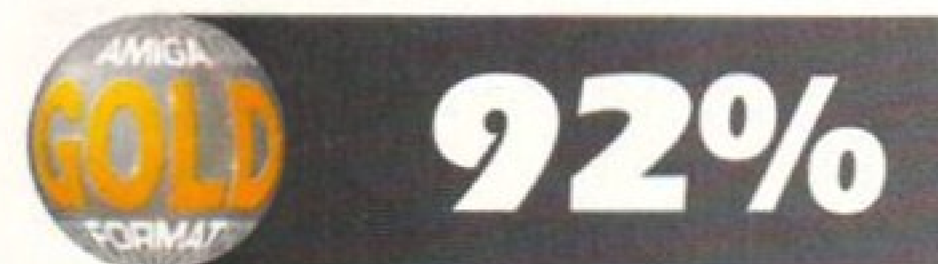
The Complete Colour Solution comprises the basic Mono VIDI Amiga, plus the RGB Colour splitter and the *VIDIChrome* software which makes it all work.

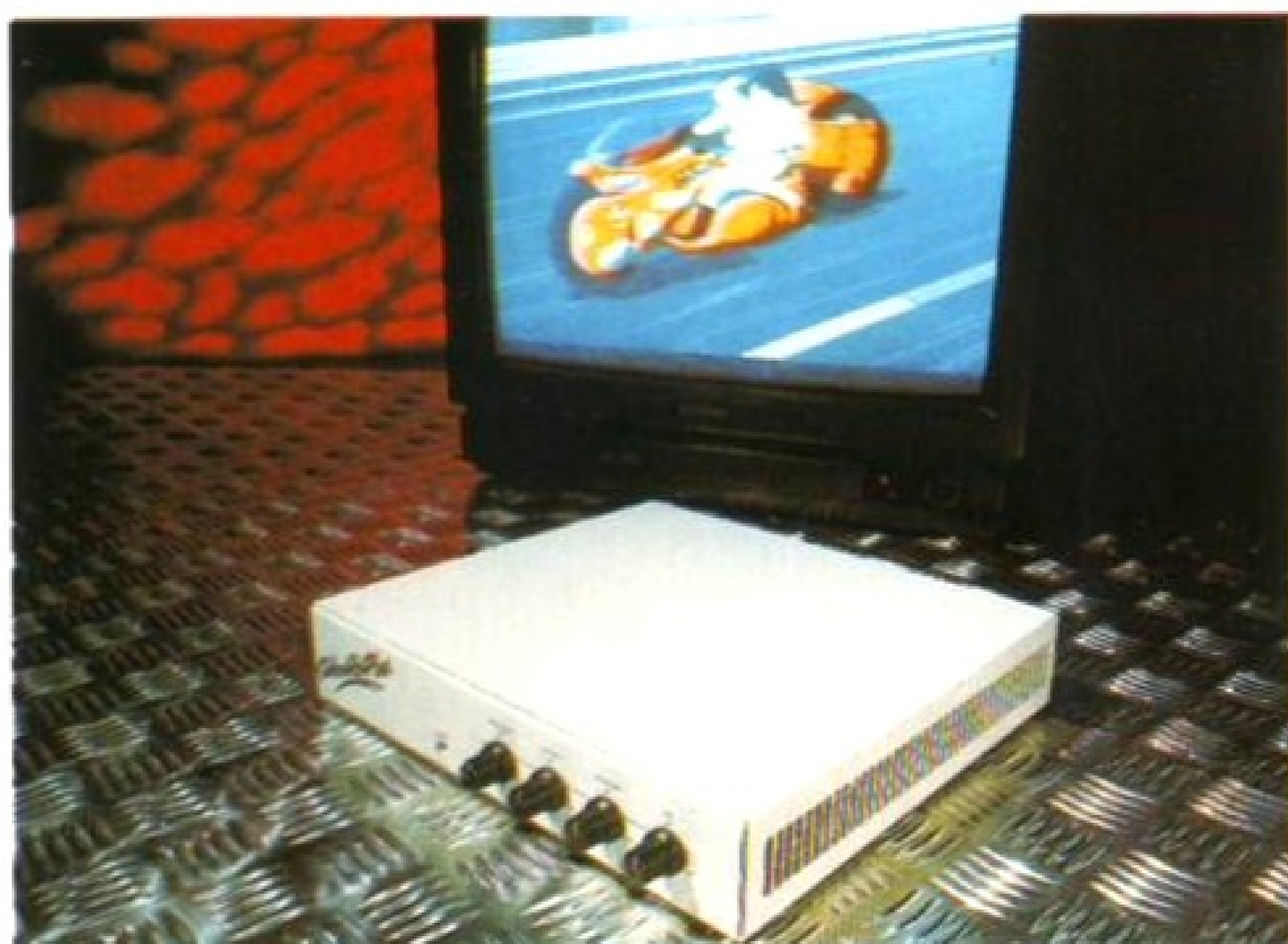
The hardware is a bit like those awful little project boxes you get in electronics shops, with flying leads everywhere and not one simple, elegant way of linking everything together and sitting it on the desk. No matter what I do it still looks like a mess of Medusan worms with hairwash problems.

The splitter takes the video signal and, on a cue from the *VIDIChrome* software (via a lead plugged in the joystick port) takes three very rapid red, green and blue (RGB) snapshots of the frame you've fed it. The video frame has to be on Pause, of course. These shots are then combined as a single, sharp HAM image that can be saved to disk. It looks bad but it works very well. The only quibble I have with the design is putting the control knobs for brightness and soon on, on the back of the unit where you it's difficult to reach them.

The VIDI on its own is a very creditable 16 greyscale mono video grabber which even grabs a series of frames for you to choose from, or animates them for you. The *VIDI* software is fast, so no still-frame is needed although, to choose the exact frame you want, requires judicious use of the Pause control simply because VIDI doesn't grab every single frame. I like the quality of the mono and the colour versions included in this package and, if the price puts you off for some reason, remember that all the items in the bundle are available separately for you to buy one at a time. So, you can end up with the Complete Colour Solution, even if it's a little incomplete to begin with. I like this one a lot.

The new unit due out from Rombo hasn't, unfortunately, made it in time for this roundup, but the VIDI Amiga 12 is the next generation VIDI, and looks likely to give all the other quality digitisers a run for their money.





The ColourPic Plus hardware is very professional looking, and has wires bristling out of every port available. This is a very pro' item.

Similarly to the VLab, the ColourPic can save pictures in any Amiga resolution, up to 24-bit. Because the image quality is so high to begin with, the final results are hard to top.



ColourPic Plus

JCL ■ £699

The ColourPic Plus comes hot on the heels of the ColourPic and SuperPic machines from JCL which set a precedent for high-quality digitising. The drawbacks with the original machines were manifold, in spite of their obvious quality. You had to have external monitors to see the images that you were grabbing, and they only did normal Amiga resolution pictures, and not the near 24-bit that they were grabbing.

Well, the 24-bit market has moved on a bit since then, and so has the ColourPic. Pressing the spacebar switches the view on your monitor between the live framestore image and the Amiga screen. Freeze the video, and the frame freezes on your screen, you can see it. Then you can import it into the new software, *Cabaret Plus*, and save it as any format of Amiga picture up to 24-bit, or in either an AIM or RAW file format.

The software is intelligent and knows when frames have been stored and imported to the Amiga. Obviously, an accelerator would be a bonus because uploading and downloading frames from the framestore takes time and, if you're anything like me, that's the one resource that always runs out before video tape and money.

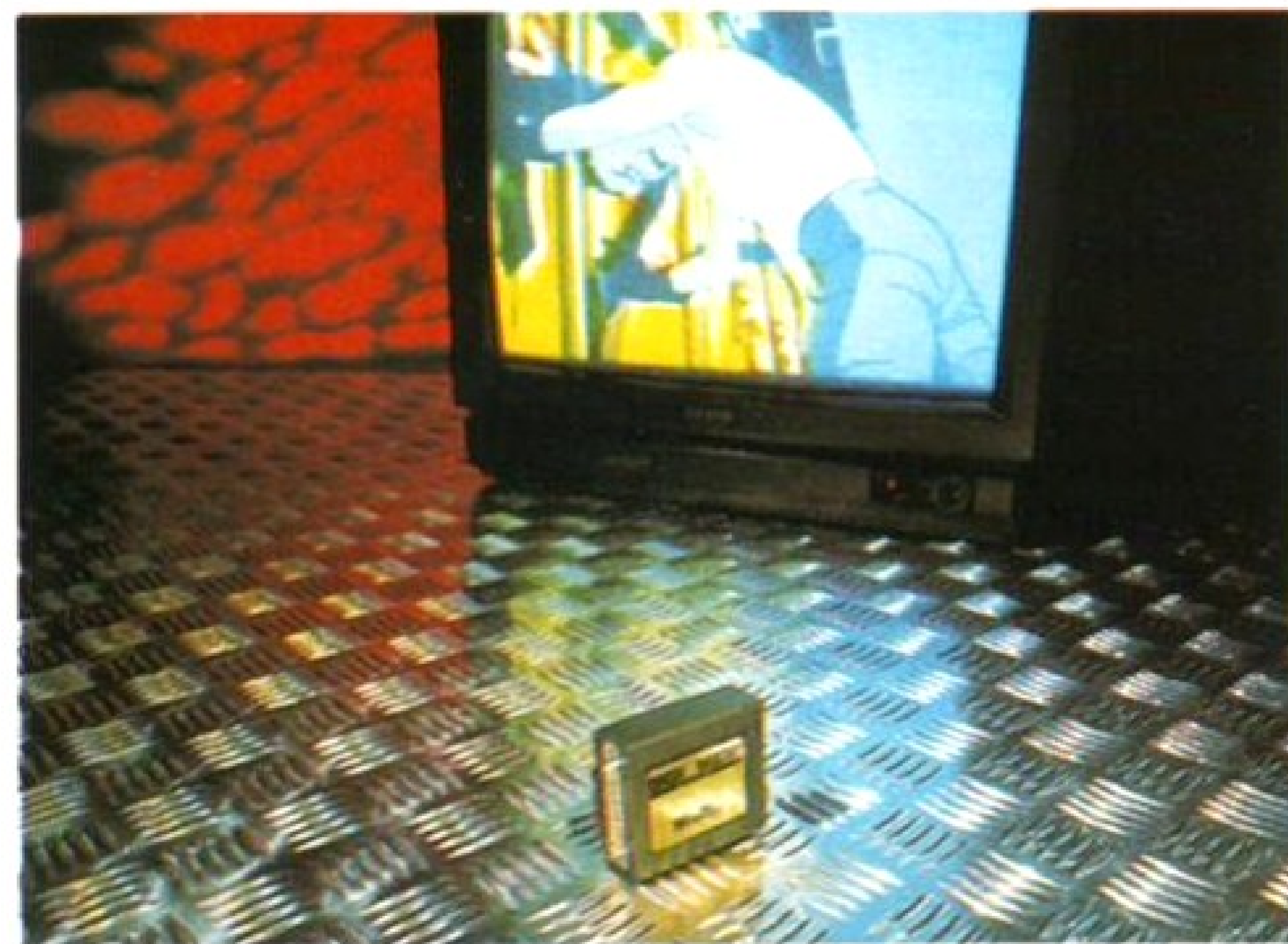
It's very impressive to see a live TV picture freeze when you hit F1 but, for the price, it needs to be impressive. Obviously this is aimed at high-end Amiga enthusiasts and low-end professional outfits. Any piece of equipment this expensive is not for your average Joe on the street and why should it be? Do Ferraris cost the same as Nissan Micras? Both will get you down to the shops, but only one of them does the job with any amount of style.

I have had a few problems using the review unit, although I'm assured by JCL's technical staff that this is a whim of my Amiga system so I haven't been able to save IFF and IFF24 pictures from the unit. A dodgy library, a loose cable? I never did track down the problem. The machine performed perfectly well in everything else apart from this, so I couldn't really justify a quibble about a silly little inconsistency such as this.

I just wish I was rich enough to own one!

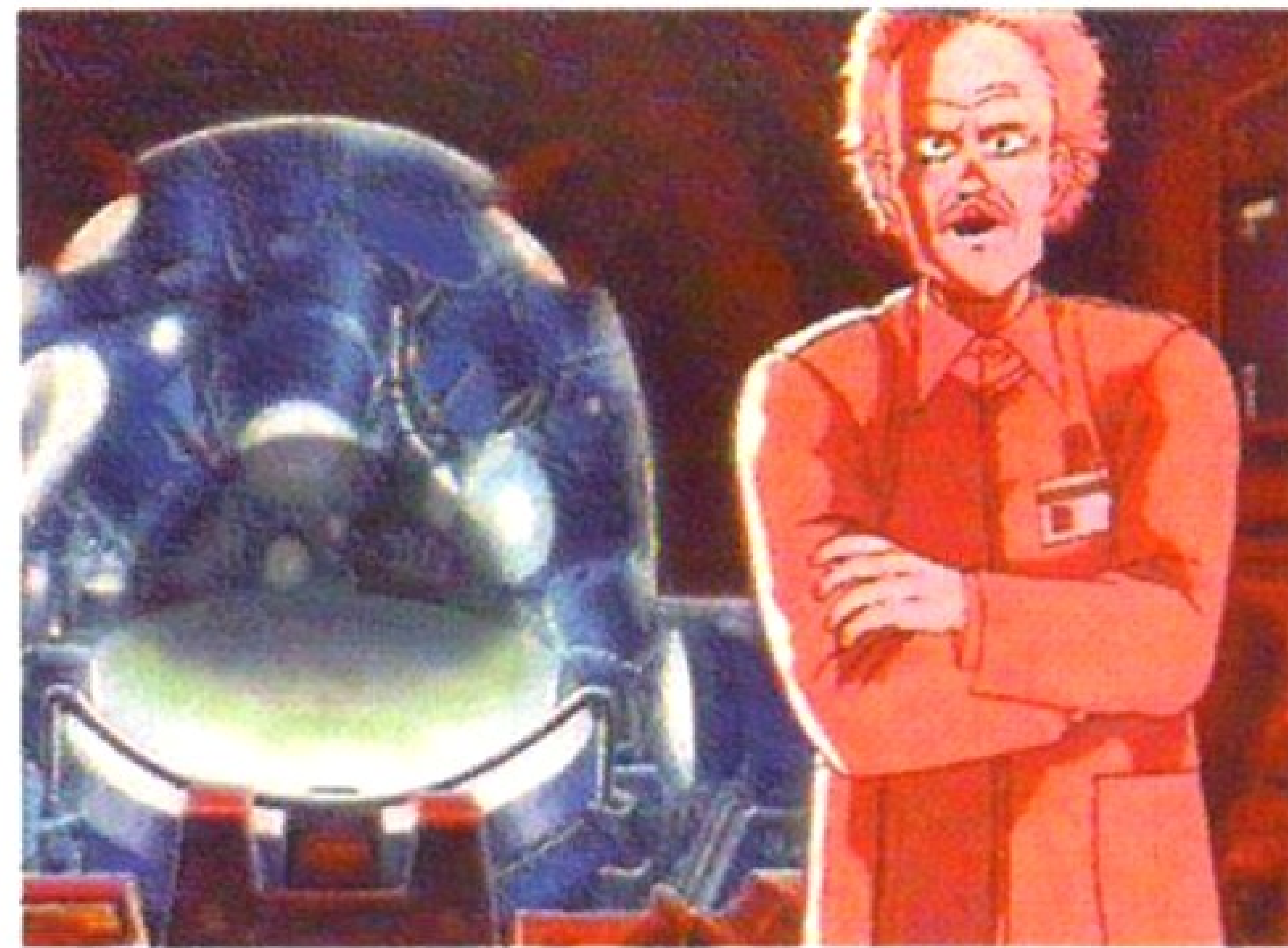


91%



Considering the age of the hardware, DigiView is still a very high quality item, although it has no bells and whistles like more expensive units.

If you use an RGB splitter you can get good results from video-film. It is not really designed for this however, and you get better results using a video camera.



DigiView Gold

NewTek ■ £149.95

An oldie to be sure, but a goodie nonetheless. The idea is that you use the unit with a black and white video camera mounted on a tripod or a copying stand, and then use colour filters over the lens to scan manually for the RGB components of the picture from a photo or other flat image. The filters alter the tones going into the digitiser and, if the black and white images are coloured red, green and blue respectively, and combined, you get a colour picture! A little trick NewTek learned from NASA, I suspect.

More recently this method was automated: the filters were rotated automatically by a robot filter turning device. This method was simple but effective, although somewhat hilarious. Quality wise DigiView is still hard to beat. The drawback is that, in order to get up and running, you also have to buy a black and white video camera and copy stand, as well as the basic unit and software. It will run using a splitter from a video source, but DigiView is a little bit picky about its video sources. So, unless you have some good quality video gear, and a splitter it's usually best to stick with the b/w camera route.

Having said all that, it does deliver, by virtue of all it's internal workings being 24-bit. As a by-product of being 24 bit (at least internally) the software produces high-quality images and can also load and convert 24-bit pictures. All you do is load your 24-bit picture into the program and it's displayed at the current resolution selected in the screen setup menu. This is an undocumented feature, but it works very well, and although it takes a few minutes to sort it all out, this is one of the easiest ways to preview a 24-bit picture for systems without any kind of expensive framestore attached. The software is slow, but it takes its time for a reason, and the reason is image quality.

In spite of its age, DigiView is still one of my favourite digitisers although not, as I said for working direct from video tape. It can do it, but the image quality generally suffers because this is not what it was designed for.

All the same, 'slow', and 'quality' are the watchwords. If you want a fast, flashy and generally go-faster stripe digitiser, look somewhere else, because you won't find it here.



90%

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The KCS Power PC Board fits to any Amiga in minutes:

- On A500 and A500 Plus machines it simply slides into the trapdoor expansion and doesn't invalidate your warranty!
- On bigger Amigas, such as the 1500/2000/2500/3000, it drops into a vacant Amiga slot using the custom designed adaptor board.
- Once fitted, your Amiga can be switched into PC mode simply by clicking an icon. Just reset and it's an Amiga again.

No fuss, no hassle. Just two machines in the space of one.

Video

- Supports the majority of EGA and VGA modes in 16 glorious colours and monochrome - graphics up to 640 x 480 and text too. Interlace is required for some modes but a software flicker fixer is built in.
- Other video modes include MDA and CGA text and graphics. Also supports Tandy colour graphics adaptor and Hercules monochrome.
- EGA and VGA graphics can be displayed on a domestic TV or monitor. Unlike *real* PCs, no extra hardware is required.

Disk

- Up to four Amiga drives can be connected to your system and accessd in PC modes as 3.5" 720K or 5.25" 360K. Typical disk access is at least twice as fast as most real PC clones!
- DOS can be started from any mounted drive 5.25" or 3.5" and most Amiga hard drives.
- Supports most popular hard disks including GVP Impact, Supra and A590 (Omil and SCSI).
- A massive 200K ramdrive (up to 8Mb with expansion) is available in PC mode and it's PC-reset proof too.

Memory

- Even with a base Amiga 704K is free for DOS programs (640K in EGA and VGA modes).
- EMS (expanded memory) is supported allowing you to run Microsoft Windows without problems and store massive files in Lotus 1-2-3. So, if you have 8Mb on board, the PC can use it.
- XMS (extended memory) is supported even though this is not usually possible on NEC V30 machines.

Speed

Its Landmark speed puts it way ahead of many true PC systems - it even compares favourably with many AT clones.

However, the crux of the matter lies with the video speed; and this, as many critics have noted is where the KCS Power PC Board scores over all others. It's no use having a wizz-bang processor if the screen takes several seconds to redraw itself.

- Tests in text modes have shown it is several times faster than even AT clones with dedicated video hardware. Even in graphics modes, it's no slouch although the emulation is limited by Amiga hardware.
- Add a processor accelerator card, and the 32-bit clean KCS cache software will use it to its full advantage.

Mouse

- Automatic serial mouse emulation is supplied as standard - using your existing Amiga rodent.
- Mouse can be configured as COM1 or COM2.

COMING VERY SOON
The KCS Power PC Board for the A600

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Joystick

- Up to two sticks can be employed at any time. You decide how they are arranged.

Printer

- Your Amiga's parallel port is accessed as LPT1 in PC mode

Serial

- DOS usually supports two serial ports, but one is taken by the Amiga mouse. The Amiga's serial can be set as COM1 or COM2 as desired, ie for MODEM etc. up to 19200 baud full-duplex.

Sound

- PC sound is supported, but there's an additional volume control available in software.

Works on...

- All Amigas (except the A1000) fitted with Kickstart 1.2 and Workbench 1.2 or higher.
- Extra memory is not required, but full use will be made of extra hardware, like accelerators, flicker fixers, modems etc.

"PC emulation is a contentious issue - but the KCS Power PC Board is the only one to carry my personal recommendation. It is an excellent product that does all it claims and does it well." -
comments Mark Smiddy, co-author of Mastering AmigaDOS 2.

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The DCTV is a small black box that plugs into the RGB socket, with a pass through for your Amiga monitor and a composite display.



Although the images can seem quite fuzzy on the screen, this is actually a bonus as it covers any slight degradation of the captured images.

DCTV

Silica Shop ■ £399

A bit of an oddity this and, although it does grab and edit frames of composite video, digitising is not it's main function in life. It is in fact a display enhancing device enabling a very good simulation of True Colour on a composite video monitor. The unit plugs into the RGB socket on the Amiga and has a pass through directly to your Amiga monitor. The output from the video-out on the device is sent out to either a composite TV monitor or the video in port of a video recorder.

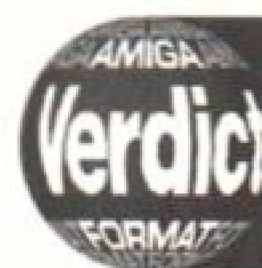
The software is an entirely integrated suite, so all operations can be performed from within the one program. The package includes paint software for you to treat and colour your digitised images. The files you create with either the paint or digitise sections can be saved off in a variety of useful formats.

The digitising is very straightforward, and the unit has another lead to plug into the parallel port for sending the images to the Amiga. A full overscan screen can be digitised and then later manipulated in any way that you like. The resulting image can be saved as a normal Amiga file, a DCTV file or even a 24-bit file using a separate program.

OK, so digitising is a very small part of what the DCTV is, but it does do it, and the quality is surprisingly good. Obviously being a composite signal, the boundaries between colours are a little fuzzy. But this actually works in its favour for the likes of TV pictures. Any lack of resolution is covered by the blending together of the pixels on the screen.

Naturally, this doesn't lend itself to very fine pixel sharp work. DCTV is happiest with a more painterly, splodgy effects. So fuzziness is good, but only in the right sort of pictures. One thing to look out for is the fact that any text in your digitised screen seem a little too soft, affecting the legibility.

DCTV takes us into the '90s where True-Colour 24-bit images are the order of the day. But fortunately for the majority of us, it all of this without the meaty price-tag, which is something that a few other makers of True Colour devices could take a lesson in customer-satisfaction from.



85%



The two units plug into the expansion socket on a 500 or A500 Plus, but they have a pass-through in case you need any external drives or memory.



The image quality in HAM mode is a bit on the chunky side, more so than most other units. It is fast though, so this is a bit of a trade off.

Datel Video Digi 2

Datel ■ £89.99

This is the original Digi on which the Real Time unit was based. And this is a near cousin of the VIDI, in that it's an almost real-time mono frame grabber. It's a virtually identical unit to the digitiser unit which comes with the Real Time colour system, but with the absence of the all-important RGB sync-socket at the back.

The software has a row of buttons on which you click to start monitoring the input, and another on which you click to grab the actual image you want. These buttons have clear icons on them so that you can tell at a glance what is going on.

Like the VIDI, it also grabs a number of frames preceding the one you want, and it can animate them if you wish. I still can't figure this out. Why you would want an animated black and white grab from a video anyway? You can't really do anything with it, other than make a demo out of it. There is a small player to play the SEQ files you can save out, for all you budding demo makers out there.

Again the control knobs for input brightness and contrast are at the back of the box, well out of the way – why any serious company else does this I still I don't know. This is so unbelievably silly, because it would be just as simple to bring the dials around the front and put a big plastic knurled knob on the silly spindly little controls. I hope somebody pays attention to this quibble, so that in the next versions of this (and the VIDI) the controls are made easier to twiddle without rising from your chair to fiddle around down the back.

The 16-shade grey-scale images are very nice quality, as good if not slightly better than the VIDI just looking at them, but again the images are at a 256x256 resolution for some reason unknown to me. This can be altered with a menu selection when you save but this course of action does tend to make the images look a little elongated.

The quality is good, as I say, which makes me wonder why the quality of the colour version is so coarse. Grey-scale images are perfect for black and white DTP, and this is a cost effective alternative to a hand-scanner, especially if what you intend to grab and DTP is mostly from video tape.



90%

Datel Real Time

Datel ■ £199.99

This box fits in the expansion slot of an A500 or A500P. This means that, if you have any extra memory in your hard drive, you have to use the pass-through on the digitiser to put it between your Amiga and your hard drive. There are two boxes which fit together, one is the new version of the VD2, the other is the Real Time colour unit.

On top of the RGB unit are knobs that adjust the levels of red, green and blue, and on the back of the digitiser are the usual brightness and contrast knobs. (I wish they wouldn't put them at the back. Grr.) The two units are chained together by their edge connectors which slot into each other and then into the expansion slot. There is also a flying lead connecting a pair of identical 5-pin DIN sockets which provide RGB sync between the two units.

The software has a row of easy to understand buttons down the right-hand side of the screen, and clicking on these activates the unit in a variety of ways: in colour or black and white, in HAM or in a 8, 16 or 32 colours. Each number of colours has another button next to it with a plus added, and this is dithered mode where a simple checkerboard dither is added to the colours to blend the edges a little. The effect is akin to 64 colours in 16-colour mode and 256 colours in 32 colour mode. In fact the whole output is a little bit on the coarse side; and the most annoying thing of all is the aspect ratio change. To compress a full screen picture into the 256x256 space left by the menu, the image is squashed horizontally. Fair quality in HAM, but not up to VIDI standards. Better results are gained by using the 32 and 16-colour modes, although the choices of colours are sometimes way off.



The Video Digitiser 2 plugs into the expansion slot at the side of a 500, and the controls are at the back!


The quality of the mono 16 greyscale images is surprisingly high, although an odd aspect ratio.



66%

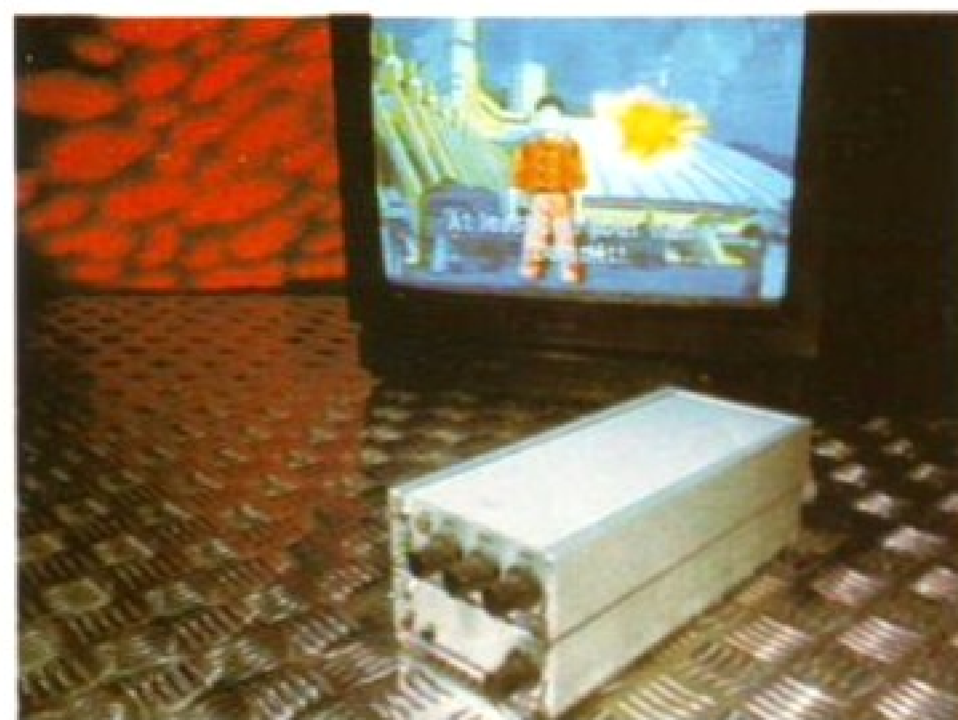
Snapshot RGB and Pro

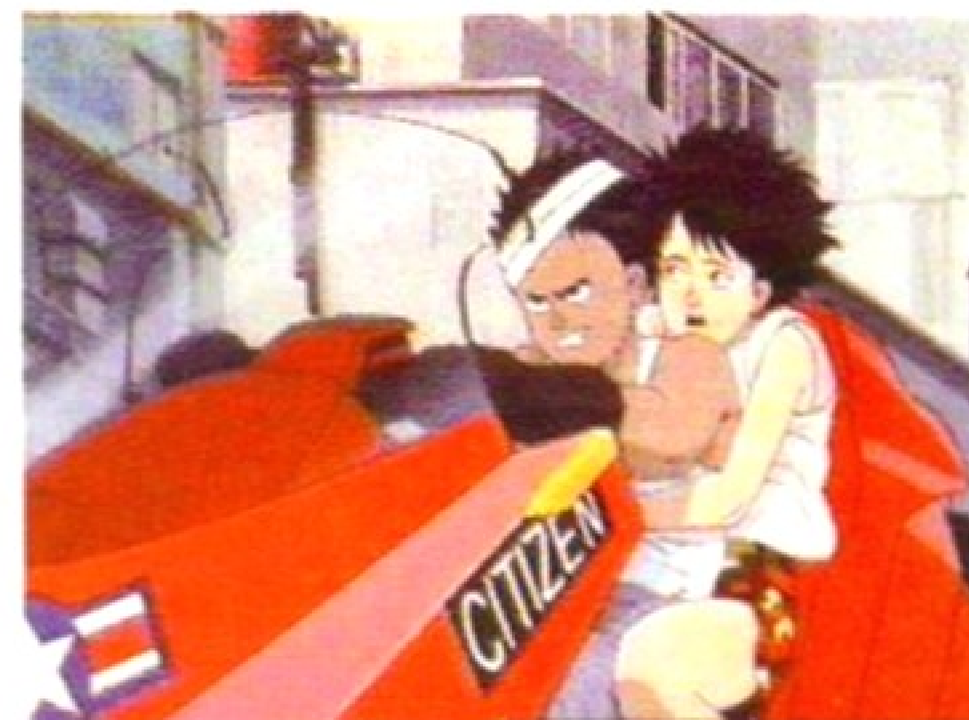
HB Marketing ■ £499

This comprises two slim silver boxes, which resemble paraphernalia from NASA. After lacing the RGB splitter and the digitiser together with a four-way phone lead, you insert a video feed into line one, and boot the software. The product is German, and it shows. Very efficient design, if a little bit project boxy and hackish looking.

Technically the machine sounds very good, and on paper it seems like a very professional machine. The manual waxes very lyrical indeed about the speed of the chips and the tech spec' of the various processes etc, etc, but when it comes right down to it, the images it produces are not so hot. From a video tape source, at any rate. As with almost all the digitisers reviewed, the unit favours working with a video camera and a copy stand in order to digitise photos and other flat media such as magazines.

Basically this is just an up-market version of the VIDI and Datel machines, with a fast black and white framegrabber bolted on to a three-pass RGB splitter, the only difference is that the Snapshot takes its inputs from a range of other sources than simple composite out from a video machine. The software can drive a video recorder remotely from the screen, and there are facilities for black and white animation of frames. 24-bit is catered for, in fact any Amiga IFF screen type is catered for. This is a bit of a strange one; using my home system I can't get the kind of quality that is so easy to achieve using the VLab or the ColourPic. Although it's pitched at the same market as those two it's not as good in my opinion. I'd place it at the high end of the middle market, the three-pass colour jobs. It does the job, but at this price it's pros only.


A very professional looking piece of kit, and you'll be needing that degree in electronics to work it out.



Nice quality in the HAM pictures from the Snapshot, but the control knobs are bit sensitive and tricky to alter.



78%

Digitiser	VIDImono	VideoDigi2	DigiView	VIDIcolour	Datelcolour	Snapshot	ColourPic	VLab	DCTV
Mono	●	●							
Three-pass			●	●	●	●			
Real time							●	●	
HAM			●	●	●	●	●	●	●
24-bit			● (21 Bit)		●		●	●	●
Anims	●	●					●		
Parallel port	●		●	●		●	●		●
Internal								●	
Expansion slot		●			●				
Supplier	Rombo 0506 414631	Datel 0782 744707	Silica Shop 081-309 1111	Rombo 0506 414631	Datel 0782 744707	HBM 0753 686000	JCL 0892 518181	AC Scotland 0896 87583	Silica 081-309 1111

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Akira is available on video from Manga/Island World Video on 081-748 9000. Get it, it's very good!

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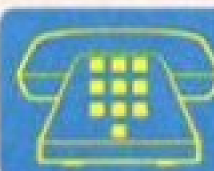
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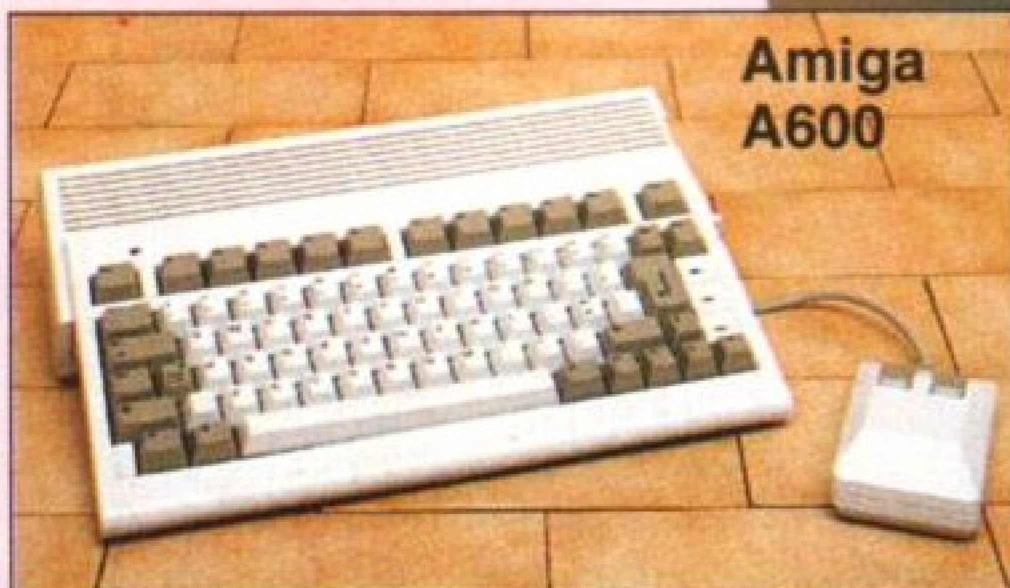
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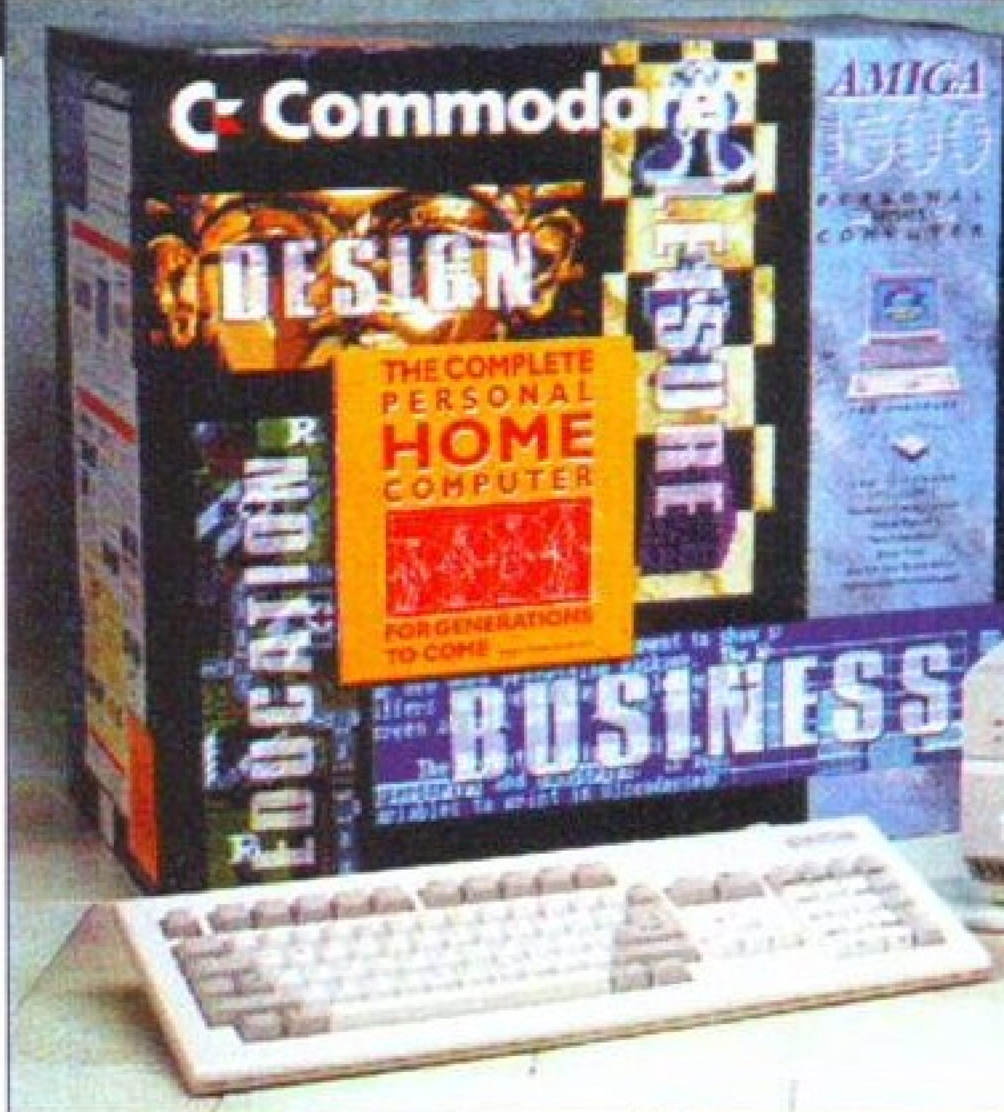
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PD Update

Ever more releases continue to push the Public Domain in different directions. **Pat McDonald** names a few of the more noteworthy programs to hit the scene.

ELITE CHEAT — TOOL
Startronics 001



Some of the artwork included as an extra on this twin disk pack is quite atmospheric, if not terribly well done.

What! Surely by now everyone knows the cheat for *Elite*? Well, maybe, but it's not exactly easy to use. The idea is to enter the correct name for your commander (the name varies from version to version) and then you can access a cheat screen. But, the only trouble is that entails entering the right byte value into the right place. This two disk licenceware release helps out a lot. For one thing, one disk contains 20 preset super commanders for you to load and play with. No more endless blasting to get all the extra equipment or play the special missions.

In addition, the other disk contains a full low down on how to make your own cheat commanders, for those who want to get their hands dirty. It's very comprehensive, although it doesn't seem to mention how you edit your position in the game. For those who need to cheat, this is a must. Personally, I reckon the game's not much cop without all the hard work needed to build up a weak commander – but if you must, get this.

ALPHAGRAPH — TOOL
NBS (CLR)



Although *Alphagraph* is rather confusing, at least most options can be selected by pointing and clicking.

Paul McKnight has put together quite a nifty little graph drawing program. Just select the type you want (3D or 2D bar, pie or exploded pie chart) and input the data. Next thing you know a graph is plotted, and can be printed out. There are a lot more options for tidying up the graph, like labelling the x and y axes.

Although the documentation for this program is rather sparse, it is quite easy to use when you have tried it out a few times.

The more exotic options include keeping one or two graphs in memory with which you can compare a third. Although more confusing than say *MultiPlot* for experienced Amiga users, *Alphagraph* is quite a good choice for the occasional plotter.

SAS MENU MAKER V1.0 — TOOL
VIRUS FREE PD CLU05



Although of limited use, *SAS MenuMaker* does take some of the sting out of making your own PD compilation disks.

First off, this has nothing (directly) to do with programming in Lattice C. It was written by a team of two, namely Grim Reaper and Druid of the SAS coding crew. It's a program for designing your own disk 'front ends' to click on with a mouse, in the same vein as *Get Set Go!*, *MenuMaster* and similar programs. So you boot a disk, click on an option and voilà.

It's easy to use, and quite capable. You can set up to 30 butttons on screen – when these are clicked on a relevant CLI command runs. You can have a graphic logo at the top of the screen as well. Although slightly fussy (version 2 is now being written) you can do things other programs do not permit, such as rearrange the position of the buttons on screen. The resulting menus are also fairly compact on a disk, so if you're doing a self-booting disk stuffed with programs, this could help set it up. Although it is licenceware, the system used to run menus is freely distributable. I expect to see a lot of people using this for their PD disks.

CYBERNETIX — GAME
NBS G295



Sadly, the best part of *Cybernetix* we can't show – the ultra-fast movement and the cranked up chip sounds.

Very playable, this game. *Cybernetix* is similar in style to *Defender* and *Stargate*, but uses larger graphics. The result is a solid destruction game which looks pretty as well. It is shareware (the fee is £5) and was written by Paul Andrews, Rodney Smith and Blair Zuppicich of Vision Software in Australia. The same crowd who did the highly acclaimed *Microbes* game.

In this game you flit around in a sexy star fighter, blasting aliens into space dust. Large asteroids must be blown up, which once hit change into smaller asteroids, which in turn must be blown up. Sometimes they release blue sparks, which you can trade with your opponents for weaponry power-ups.

It's fast (well, so long as there's not too much on the screen) and scrolls smoothly. Miss it at your peril, because like *Llamatron* it's got short-term appeal for the poorly coordinated, but long-term appeal for true alien annihilators. Great fun!

Continued on Page 200

ROULETTE
17 BIT 2139

Ever wanted to play on a roulette wheel, but never had the cash or nerve? I must admit I've never had a spin myself, but this certainly seems to have most of the features of the real thing.

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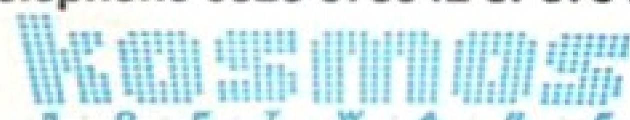


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AMOS CRICKET

17 BIT 2022

It had to happen, I suppose. A half-decent cricket game has finally shown up on the Amiga PD scene. It doesn't look amazing, but it plays very well. Paul Robson obviously spent time thinking about how this should play before putting finger to keyboard.

This is a shareware release – you can do everything with it as in the full version. It's preset to be a five-day match between England and Australia, but you can alter the teams, the game length and even the pitch. You can't save them to disk, though, without the registered version.

Playing *AMOS Cricket* is fairly simple, assuming you know how the real game works. Batting is controlled with a joystick, while bowling is achieved by pointing and clicking with the mouse.

You can set the bowler to automatic if you want (it is rather dull to point and click at the same spot all the time) but by varying the aim-point you soon discover your bowler's strengths and weaknesses.

OK, so it looks dull. Another downpoint is the registration message – to get rid of it and keep playing the game, you have to click on a sequence of on-screen boxes. That's easier said than done if your mouse buttons have too much bounce and not enough click.

But I still like playing it. I'm not a great cricket fan, but this is fun and not too simple. Good cricket games are few and far between – and for a £4 registration fee, you get one of the best, without the silly messages and with a save-game option.



Batting is much more difficult than bowling in *AMOS Cricket*. Scoring runs is a fine art.

DEADLOCK 3

MAG

RAPIER



One of the few pages which we can actually show you without fear of upsetting anyone. Not for the squeamish.

This is a rather good disk magazine, in a similar vein to *LSD Grapevine* but subtly different. The way in which it works is much prettier than *Grapevine*, but it takes a while to work out what the colourful icons do. Also, the language (while still salted and peppered with obscenities) is at least spelt correctly for the most part.

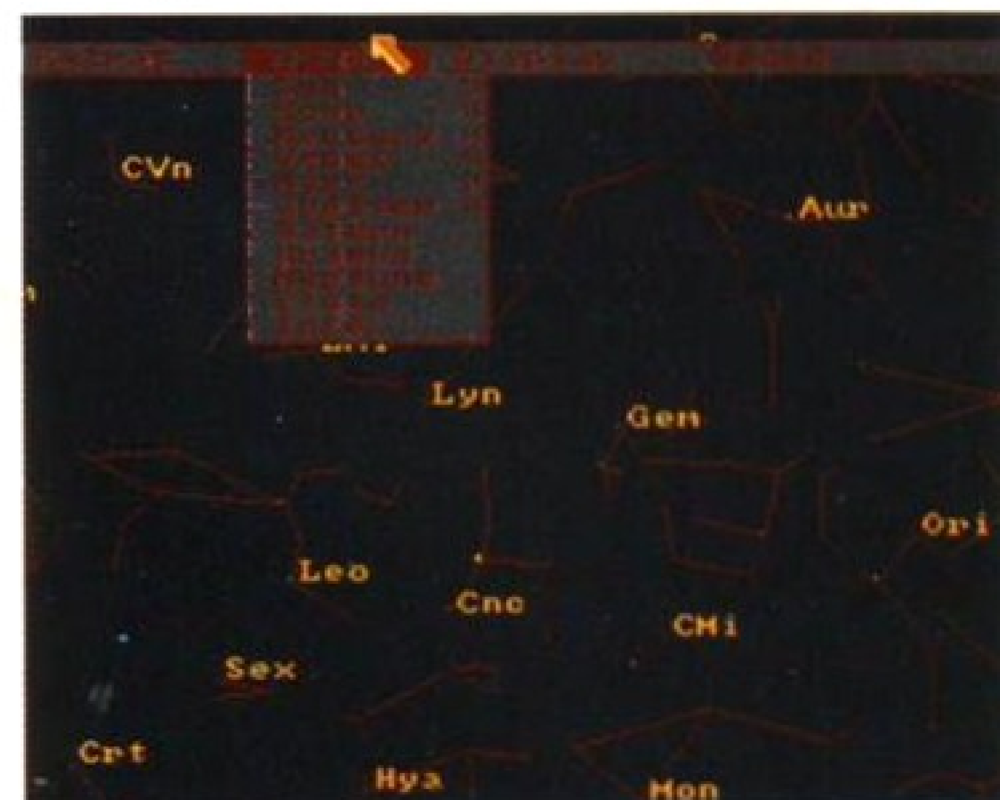
Deadlock only comes on one disk, so there's not as much as you'll find on *Grapevine*. But the variety of subjects is pretty good – from Nobby's Plimsoles to Spoonbending with Mr Nude. More serious articles are available on preventing rippers from working, HST modems and a tutorial on how the CIA chips work, to name but a few.

This is a good (if highly immature) read. It's obvious that a lot of care and attention has gone into making it simple to use. Well done Dimension X, R9 and Punisher (the people responsible).

NIGHTSKY

TOOL

NBS (CLR)



One confusing part of *NightSky* is that the constellations are abbreviated to three letters. It's hard on novices.

This one's for astronomers – people who study the stars for themselves, rather than trying to predict the future from them. You input the date, year and time, and also the position of Earth from which you're observing and the computer generates a view of the night sky from that position.

Also included are a number of refinements – you can turn the constellations on and off, track the movements of any planets in view (planets don't move like stars) and also zoom into the night sky, to get a similar view as seen through a telescope or binoculars.

NightSky is very similar in concept to *Distant Suns*, and although the latter program undoubtedly has more heavenly bodies in the views, *NightSky* is dead handy for finding your way around the stars. It works with southern skies as well!

Congratulations to John Brian – this is one of the more useful (if limited) AMOS programs I've seen for a while. Now when you notice a meteorite about to hit planet Earth and end civilisation as we know it, you'll be able to say roughly where it was.

LEGEND OF LOTHIAN

GAME

ANGLIA ADV1-5



Weapons and armour are vital in order to stay alive in *LOL*. Serious monster hacking is involved.

This is a graphic adventure game. Although crude by today's standards, it's slightly similar to the very first *Ultima* games. The play area is a small square section of the screen, where you can see your main character moving around a flat landscape.

You start the game as a simple shepherd, but you soon leave your flock to sort out the troubles of the land of Lothian. This is the playing area and it has towns, castles and ruins dotted along the way. Combat is frequent, with nasties leaping at you every few steps.

There is a plot to this game. The old king has had a spell cast on him, which prevents him waking from a dreamless sleep. Without the king, the land is gradually falling apart. So the main task is to catch up with the wizard who did the evil deed and do away with him.

Although designed to be keyboard controlled, the author (David Meny) has made the mouse capable of doing nearly everything. This makes the game slightly easier to play and so more enjoyable. The plot of completing various tasks to get further into the game has been well thought out, with one exception. Don't give the mirror to Lord Forlorn until you have the unicorn!

The other things that let the game down are the naff graphics and the appalling amount of slaughter and game saving necessary. But it is fun and quite challenging, though not terribly big. However it is one of the best graphic adventures I have seen.

TOP 10 DEMOS OF THE MONTH

Every month we print a chart of the top 10 demos from a popular PD library. This month it's the turn of...

NBS

1.	Sid 2 MultiDOS	PU 207
2.	Text Engine 3.4	U 723
3.	Benchmaster	U 701/2
4.	Typing Tutor	CLU 03
5.	D Copy II	U 721
6.	Captionator	PU 215
7.	PC Task	PU 205
8.	MS DOS Utils	PU 206
9.	Soundtracker 2.6	PT 021
10.	Superkillers	PU 117

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E & OE

PD Demo Zone



Andy Nuttall has been slaving and toiling over a hot Amiga to bring you a selection of graphics and music demos that are part of the sub-culture we know as the Public Domain. Also featured are some animations from a Schwartz-esque new talent... so take take time out to get cultured. Read on...

DUNCAN THE BEETLE

ANIM

VIRUS FREE PD, DISK 2892



"Aha, a large mound of dung. I must dive into it immediately." Dung beetles are well-known for being stupid.

Ah, yes. Once again a whole month passes without any sign of an Eric Schwartz animation. Sigh. Looking on the bright side, though, there are a few other animators out there who are getting close to his standard, and one of them is Roddy McMillan.

Using *MovieSetter*, Roddy has put together a bright, colourful animation which tells the story of a dung beetle trying to push a large mound of dung... as they do, I suppose. Anyway, Duncan (as is the beetle's name) finds the mound a little too heavy, so he tries taking a good long run up – finding out the hard way that the dungball is still soft and squishy... Eurrghh!

It's obvious from the feel of the animation that the author has been heavily influenced by Eric Schwartz, he even states this in the introduction. However, one thing that makes Schwartz animations stand out from the rest is the simplicity of the graphics – lots of cuteness and expression, but not overly detailed – and McMillan's graphics are just that little bit too complicated. Still, this is one of the author's first attempts, so let's hope he keeps producing 'em!

KINGFISHER

ANIM

VIRUS FREE PD, TWO DISKS



This little fellow is taken from the *Real Things* clip art library, and is used to good effect in this demo.

The second piece of work by Roddy McMillan this month is a set of two single-disk animations which show a kingfisher trying to catch a fish (hence the name). The first disk shows the bird eyeing up the fish and swooping down to the lake to catch it, while the second has him leaving the lake, fish in beak, and flying back up to his perch in a tree.

The animations have an authentic use of colour. The main character (which is from a clip art library) is particularly realistic, and the attention to detail in the backgrounds is extremely good – especially the ripples that are created as the kingfisher breaks the surface of the lake.

As well as the bird itself, the trees and waterfall are also nicely animated, which makes the whole thing just that bit more realistic.

Unlike *Duncan The Beetle*, *Kingfisher* contains no sound, which is a bit of a shame because this would have added to the atmosphere considerably. It's also a shame that the two disks were not linked so that the second animation plays directly after the first - as they stand, the two disks are totally separate, which seems a little odd. These are the only criticisms, though, and the disks are certainly worthy of a look.

BATMAN RETURNS

DEMO

DARREN COLLENDER
REQUIRES 1.5 MB

All right, for those of you who haven't seen *Batman Returns* yet, newcomer Darren Collender has produced this demo which has a similar feel to the film previews that you find at the start of videos (you know – the annoying ones that you fast forward through while your mate is making the tea).



This looks like The Penguin, but that's because it's digitised. The hand-drawn stuff isn't this good, though.

The demo is based on the official film preview, it features several digitised graphics screens of Catwoman, The Penguin and Batman (aka Pfeiffer, DeVito and Keaton), with some animation thrown in for good measure. The sound merely consists of a repeated sample of the music, overlayed by the voice of the narrator, and some clips from the film itself. The sampling isn't

Continued on page 206

DOLPHIN DREAMS

ANIM

17 BIT, DISK 2172

It's really good when you see relative newcomers to the PD scene coming up with good demos, and this month we have two! The first, called *Dolphin Dreams* by Craig Collins, comprises four pictures and an animation, each describing a different dolphin scene. The graphics have been ray traced in HAM mode using the *Imagine 2* program, and are of an extremely good quality.

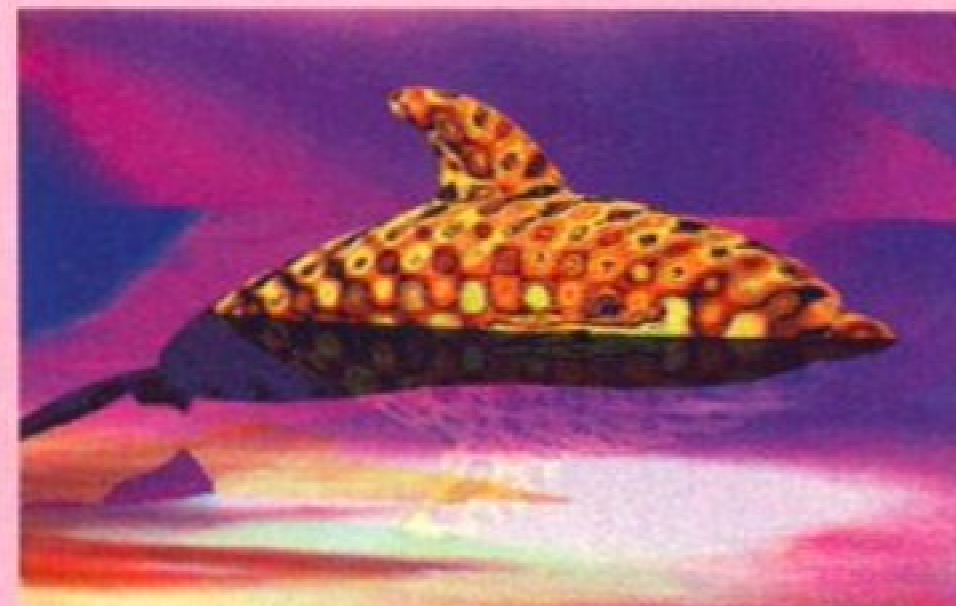
The animation shows a whole school of dolphins leaping out of a stretch of water, and flying through the air towards the monitor screen before diving back beneath the surface. The animals are all very strangely coloured, as is the water, which gives the whole thing an incredible dream-like quality. It looks really simple, but it's very, very effective.

The other three pictures are of a similar quality. One is a still frame from the animation showing two dolphins in mid-fligh. Another is a sort of title page for the group, with some dolphins decorating a *Dolphin Dreams* logo; while the other two show different types of dolphins, again in very strange and ethereal colours.

I personally think that dolphins are marvellous creatures, and I love this demo. It's imaginative, technically excellent and very well animated. Maybe Craig Collins (the author) should create a series of animal animations...



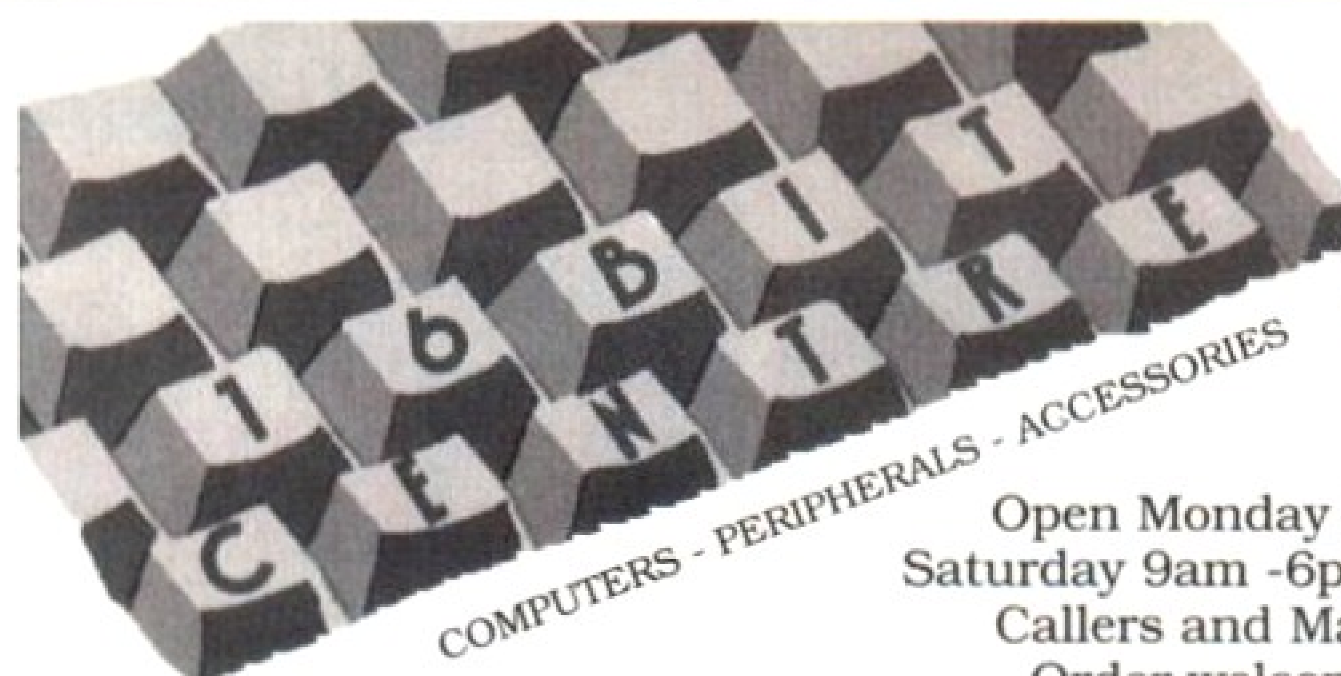
This excellent piccy is part of an animation which was ray traced using *Imagine 2*. Superb!



'Now the whaler's work is done she's crying for her little one. I bow my mortal head in shame - this murderous insanity, the madness of humanity.'
Titan, by The Sun & The Moon

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MAGGIE 2

DEMO

NBS, DISK S585

Remember *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*? Who could forget it, let's face facts. Well George Martin, the coder, has done it again! *Maggie 2* is another bizarre mish-mash of graphics, words and very strange ideas.

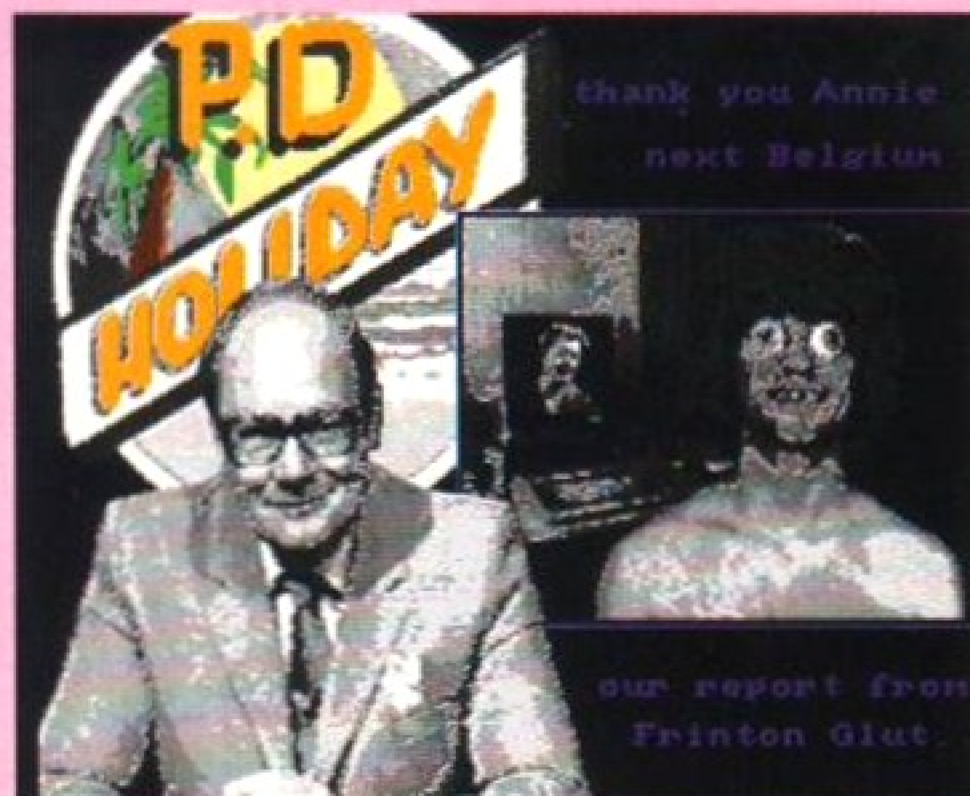
The story begins after Maggie Thatcher has been 'slightly' knocked down by a bus, and is horrifically scarred. Plastic surgery is performed, and when the bandages are removed Anneka Rice is revealed! We then cut to a holiday show with Cliff Michelmore, where Anneka is visiting a PD library in The Isle of Wight! See, told you it was weird...

The holiday programme continues in Belgium where a bloke is trying to get his A600HD to work, this is where a Spike Milligan influence is pretty apparent (remember the *Q* series?). Anyway, because it's all getting a bit too strange for the public interest, the demo introduces Inspector Morse to put a stop to all the silliness. No real ale and vintage fast cars here, though. Instead a nice character called Bert Slipper is then introduced who likes goody-goody things like painting and fluffy animals. Hmmm.

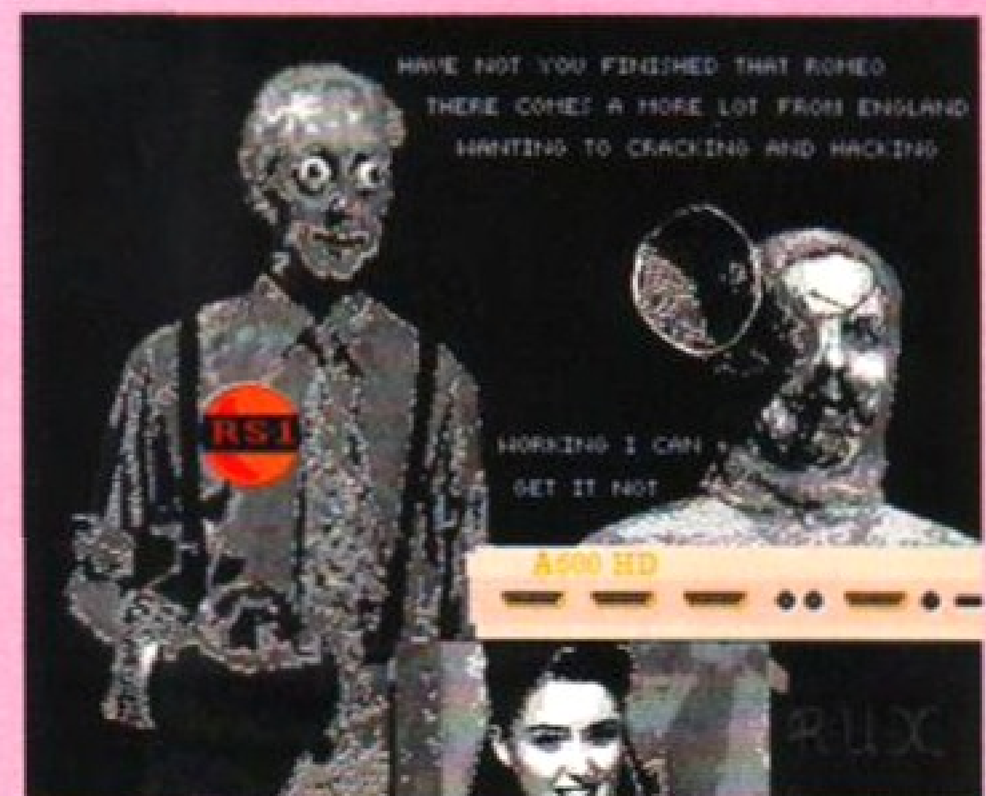
Not as strange as *Sultan*, but it's very close! If you can imagine Spike Milligan with a Monty Python feel, then your mind is probably warped as well and this will suit you down to the ground.



People on the telly always seem smaller in real life don't they? Well apart from Anneka.



And now over to Belgium, where the latest craze is Jonathan King impersonations...



This month's superdeal from Specsavers is the Eye Trumpet. Improves vision by enlarging your eyes!

too hot, but played via a good monitor speaker it is listenable enough.

An interesting demo with some nice features, but let down by a couple of points. For instance, the lip syncing on The Penguin is nothing short of terrible, and it would have been easy to make it look really good. Also, it seems that some of the screens are digitised and some are hand drawn – maybe I'm wrong, but it looks that way. Why not stick to one particular style? To cap it all, the *Batman Returns* logo at the end shows a version of the Dolby logo with 'Dolby Sterio' (sic) written on it. How can anyone spell Michelle Pfeiffer correctly and mess up with stereo? A minor point though. All you Batman fans, waiting with bated breath for *Batman Returns (Again)* could do worse than to check this out.

DYNAMIC ILLUSIONS

DEMO

17 BIT, DISK 2160



The graphics in the story are pretty good, but this bit of ray-traced animation at the end is the best bit.

This has all the credentials to be 'just another megademo' – vector shapes, plasma effects, scrolly text and such like, but fortunately it isn't. For this demo, Quartz have taken these usual megademo features and used them to describe a sci-fi story.

Originally from *2000 AD* and used in several feature films, the tale describes a spacecraft which leaves Earth in search of a new planet to colonise. After hyperspacing to a likely point 1,600 light years away, the crew discover that the planet is in fact Earth itself, but many years into the future…

Although the story is quite old and there's nothing special in the way of graphics, the demo works because of the good presentation and fast-moving soundtrack. The introduction is especially atmospheric, with an earth-shaking bass note and a couple of good thunder-clap samples.

But wait! That's not all. After the story finishes, the demo continues with a ray traced animation featuring a nodding bird balancing on a thin wire (yes, you remember – like the one you bought your Mum all those years ago from that visit to Blackpool) and some extremely colourful text.

Dynamic Illusions is an excellent demo with a good atmosphere, some nice graphics and an old but workable story – this is how megademos should be.

RSI: TIME ZONE

DEMO

17 BIT, DISK 2159



Hang on, that's the bloke what got his head cut off by the Black Vegetable, isn't it?

Another megademo! This is a very good one, of a high quality which we have come to expect from RSI over the years. OK, so the usual things are here (vector shapes and the like), but they are used sparingly which makes a refreshing change. Also, the coders have managed to convey their messages without any scrolly text, which is a definite plus!

The music's great, with excellent piano and bass samples creating a good atmosphere. The graphics are fab too (even if you do have to get through the credits to see them) and vary in style throughout the demo. And technically? It's excellent – so what are you doing sitting there? Get it now.

TOP TEN DEMOS OF THE MONTH

Every month we print a chart of the top 10 demos from a popular PD library. This week, it's the turn of...

NBS

1.	Decay: Get Frogged	PD 154
2.	Rolling Music	PM 146/147
3.	Sweet Revenge (2Mb Required)	PP 046
4.	Analogue: Falling Up	PD 167
5.	Alcatraz Odyssey	PD 130-134
6.	Terminator 3	PD 151
7.	Maggie RIP	S 585
8.	Unsporting (2Mb Required)	PP 050
9.	Silents: Exposé	PD 171/172
10.	Piece Of Mind	PD 170

WHERE TO GET THE DISKS IN THIS ISSUE

NBS:1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle Of Wight, PO33 2QQ

17 BIT: 2-8 Market Street, Wakefield West Yorkshire, WF1 1DH

Virus Free PD: 31 Faringdon Road, Swindon Wiltshire, SN2 2LS

Darren Collender: 122 Topsham Road Tooting Bec, London, SW17 8SP

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PLUS	> BUILT IN TV MODULATOR
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386dx40 Inc 14" svga colour monitor, 2 meg ram, from	£559+vat
486dx33 Inc 14" svga colour monitor, 4meg ram, from	£779+vat
486dx50 Inc 14" svga colour monitor, 4meg ram, from	£989+vat

Prices above include 2x1.44meg 3.5' disk drives, but no hard drive. Add £100+vat for 40meg HD or £150+vat for 85meg HD (1x3.5' FDD on Hard drive models) 130 & 212 meg HDs also available. Upgrade your PC - Low cost Motherboards, Cases, monitors, keyboards, FDDs, HDs, VGA & I/O cards available.

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AMIGA 1500/2000 KCS ADAPTOR	£64.99
VORTEX AT ONCE PLUS 286 PC EMULATOR FOR A500	£219.99

This is a 16MHz PC card for the Amiga500,500+,1500,2000, enabling your Amiga to run PC software. No soldering installation; VGA, EGA & CGA PC graphics modes supported; runs as a task on the Amiga; supports hard drives.80287 socket.

VORTEX GOLDEN GATE 386 CARD FOR 1500/2000 £449.99
The very latest PC Card for the A1500/2000, using a 386 cpu running at 25MHz. IDE drive interface, 1.44/2.88Mb FDD controller, CGA/EGA/VGA & Hercules emulation, 80387 socket etc. Runs as a task, runs Windows 3 in 386 Mode. Holds upto 16Mb ram - 4Mb can be used by Amiga.

MORE GVP HARDWARE

GVP PC286 16MHz EMULATOR for Series II Hard drives £184.99
This is a plug-in module for the GVP HD8 Series II hard drives. As it fits inside the GVP, there is no risk of voiding the computer warranty aas with other internally fitting emulators. Runs most PC software inc Windows, & supports EGA/VGA/CGA, & Hercules graphics. uses the A500s internal drive to read/ write MSDos disks (720k). 80287 socket.

G-FORCE 030-25MHz Accelerator for A1500/2000. 1m ram	£569.99
G-FORCE 030-40MHz Accelerator for A1500/2000. 4m ram	£799.99
G-FORCE 040-33MHz Accelerator for A1500/2000. 4m ram	£1569.99
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GVP SIMM-32 32bit 1meg 40ns simm for A530 & G-Force	£154.99
GVP SIMM-32 32bit 4meg 60ns simm for A530 & G-Force	£164.99
IV24 24BIT PROFESSIONAL VIDEO CARD for A3000	£1379.99
AMIGA 1500/2000 IV24 Adaptor	£44.99

The IV24 features: 24bit = 16 Million colours; separate RGB & Composite Genlocks; Real time frame grabber; Flicker eliminator - gives A1500/2000 owners the added bonus of a built in flicker fixer; Simultaneous RGB, composite & S-VHS outputs - makes video recording easy; Picture in picture display; Arexx supported. Full software control. Includes special IV24 versions of Scala, Caligari & Macropaint software.

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TAILORED PVC PRINTER DUST COVERS £7.99. For popular Citizen & Star printers - please state printer when ordering.

AL1 FOR TVs WITH SCART SOCKET (Not for VCRs)	£13.99
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AL2 for Ferguson Mc01/Mc03/Mc05with 8 pin Din socket	£12.99
AL4 for Hitachi/Granada sets with 7pin Din RGB input	£12.99
AL6 for Amstrad CPC464/6128 monitor (with no sound)	£12.99
AL6B for new Amstrad CPC stereo monitor	£12.99
AL7 for 1084s monitor with 8 pin Din socket	£14.99
AL7P for 1083/1084s/8833 with 9pin D socket	£14.99
AL11 with 9 pin D plug for multisync monitors	£12.99
AL12 with 15 pin 3row socket for multisync monitors	£13.99
AL13 with 15pin 3 row plug for multisync monitors	£13.99
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MODULATOR EXTENSION LEAD eliminates overhang	£10.99
MONITOR PLINTH 1 fits over Amiga & supports monitor	£23.99
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DELUXE MONITOR STATION fits over Amiga	£49.99

includes monitor/computer 1 piece PVC dust cover, mouse mat & joystick/mouse extension sockets. Both plinths have cut out for drive access & holes for mouse/joystick extension sockets. Monitor Station has cut out for hard drive as well.

MOUSE & JOYSTICK EXTENSION KIT FOR PLINTH 1 & 2	£7.99 pair
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The AMIGA FORMAT Collection

Superb, complete, full-price programs for practically nothing isn't the whole story of the **Amiga Format** Collection. You also have the chance to upgrade to new versions of the Collection programs at special prices. Here are the offers...



Sequencer One Plus Upgrade Kit

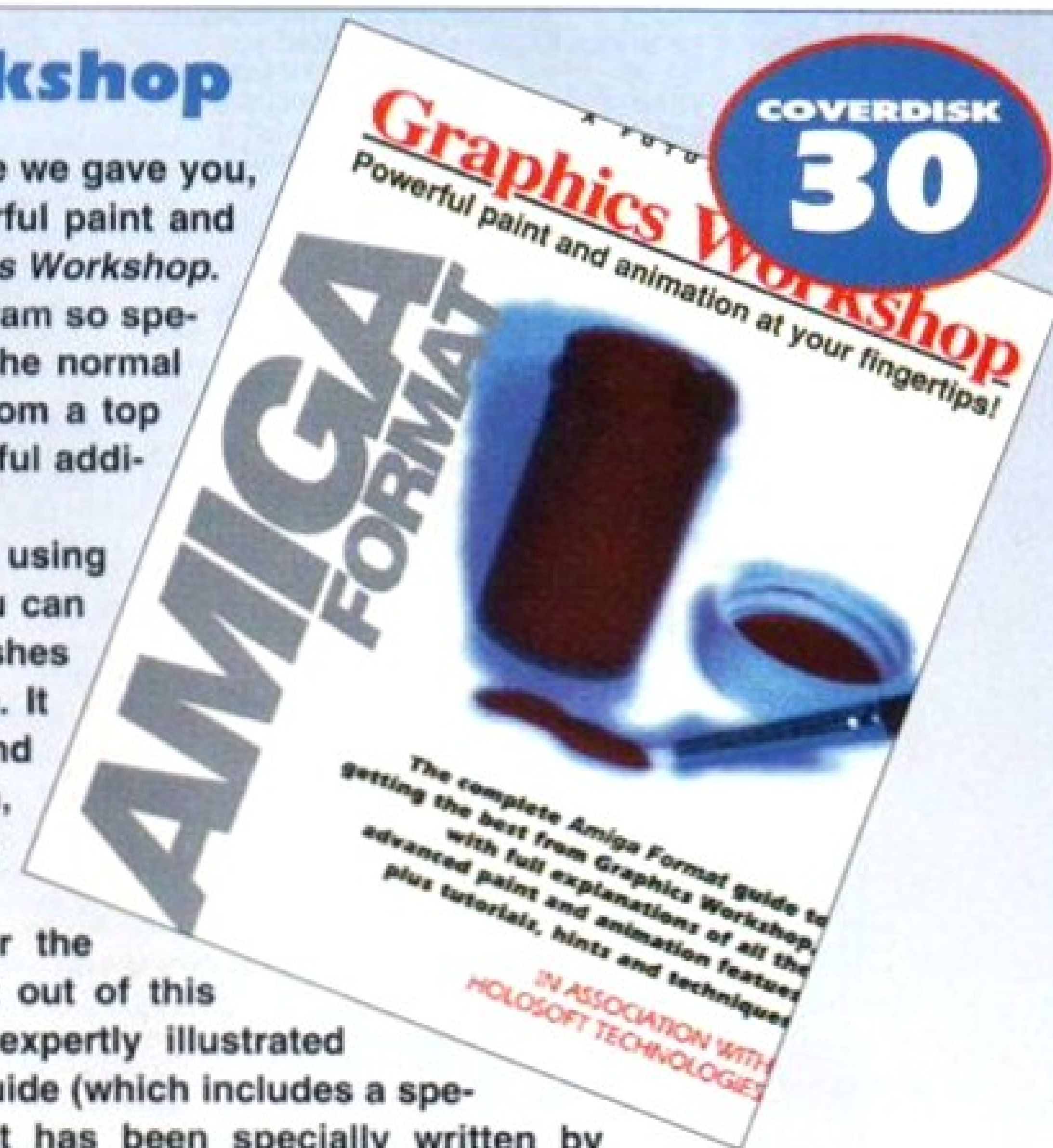
Also on the Special Christmas Issue was the powerful *Sequencer One* music package, RRP £89. (If you missed out on this amazing offer – which included *Graphics Workshop* as well – you can still get copies through Back Issues.)

Through ***Amiga Format*** Mail Order you can upgrade to *Sequencer One Plus*. By doing so you can take advantage of a whole host of extra features that are not available on version one. These include the unique Juke Box screen and Gajits' new 'Diamond Drag' note-editing system. Also included in this latest update is tempo maps, auto count in, MIDI sys ex handling, track solo, extra quantis options and much more!

All of this should really sell for a massive RRP of £129.95. For a short time though, *Sequencer One Plus* is available as an upgrade kit for *Sequencer One* owners (and that of course includes everyone who has the program from the ***Amiga Format*** Coverdisk 30) for £49.95 (RRP). But we're offering it to you at a mere £39.95 which works out at an amazing total saving of £90.

Description	Price	Order Code
Sequencer One Plus	**£39.95**	**AM235**

Graphics Workshop

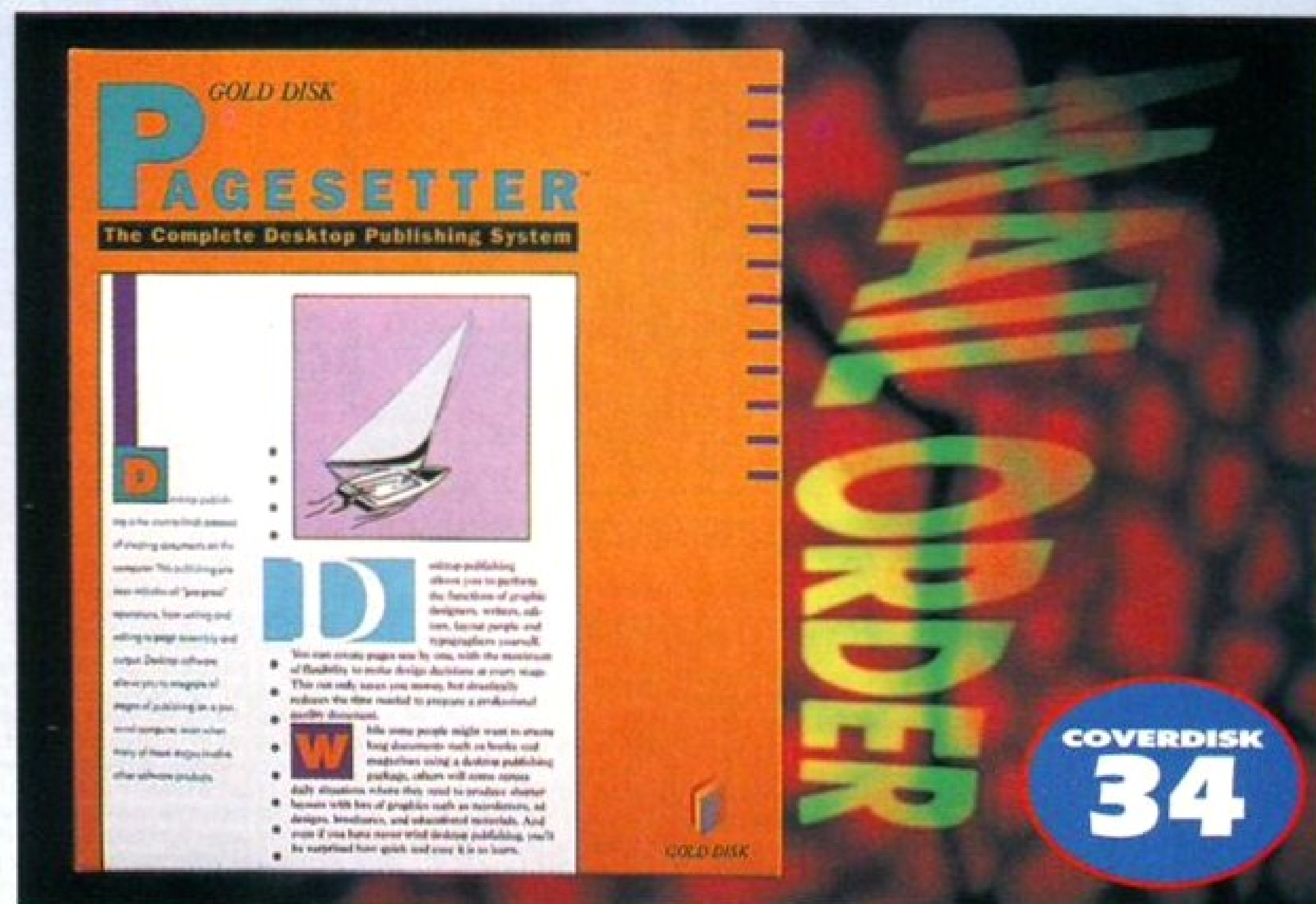


On our Christmas Special Issue we gave you, for virtually nothing, the powerful paint and animation program *The Graphics Workshop*. What makes this drawing program so special, though, is along with all the normal tools that you would expect from a top paint program are some powerful additional utilities.

You're not just limited to using one custom brush, instead you can pick up and store up to 10 brushes and use them at any one time. It also features not only ANIM and Animbrush forms of animation, but also a Cell system which is probably the most powerful animation system there is for the Amiga. Why not get the most out of this top program by buying this expertly illustrated instruction book and tutorial guide (which includes a special tutorial disk as well) that has been specially written by ***Amiga Format*** writer Maff Evans.

Description	Price	Order Code
Graphics Workshop	**£16.40**	**GPHWK**

PageSetter 2



If you want to produce a news letter for your local rugby club, or start up a footie fanzine then all you need is some DTP software. And there's no better program to start off with than *PageSetter*. We gave away version 1.2 of this very first Amiga DTP program on the Coverdisk of Issue 34, however if you want the current version here it is.

Gold Disk's update of the beginner's layout program takes a different approach from the original. It has been completely rewritten in machine code for extra speed. Also, rather than having separate text-editing and picture-editing modules, it now lets you edit text on the page. It also uses Compugraphic scalable fonts throughout, so extra quality on printout is guaranteed. All in all, this is the next best thing to professional-quality DTP on the Amiga. A full and detailed manual is included.

Description	Price	Order Code
PageSetter 2	**£50**	**PAGE UP**

Spectracolor

Oxxi Aegis actually produced *Spectracolor* before they made the *Junior* version featured on the Coverdisk of ***Amiga Format*** 35. It was the first HAM paint program to use full brush animation, in the style of *Deluxe Paint*. Its powerful features make it a must for anyone who wants to do real animation in 4,096 colours, and it also has a number of unique innovations:

Brush Wraps
Advanced PAINT Modes
Air Brush
Brush Animations – including curved path animation with fades and simple morphing.

But this upgrade, specially arranged through ***Amiga Format*** Mail Order, doesn't stop there. you'll receive a program disk, plus a sample tutorial disk and in-depth 300-page manual that will take you through countless examples and techniques showing you precisely why *Spectracolor* is such an excellent paint-and-animation package.

Description	Price	Order Code
Spectracolor	**£29.99**	**SPECT UP**

CanDo - latest version

If you want to start learning about programming a computer then you can't go far wrong with Innovatronics' 'applications generator' *CanDo*. With this package you'll be able to create a variety of applications, from accounts packages to complete multimedia information systems that encapsulate all the elements that have made this subject the talking point that it has become in recent years.

Other programs can also draw upon *CanDo*'s ability to use sampled sounds, IFF images, and even animations, and if you have Workbench 2 you can even use *CanDo* to control other applications on even hardware devices using ARexx scripts.

Innovatronics have been listening to requests from the people who used the original version of this powerful multimedia package, and the latest version 1.6 of the full professional *CanDo* program has a number of updates in accordance with their requests. Among these is full support for the the gameport device, which means you can even write games with it! The program comes with a full and detailed manual, which could make all the difference for aspiring *CanDo* programmers.

Description	Price	Order Code
CANDO	**£89.95**	**CANUP**

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mini Office



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Description	Price	Order Code
Mini Office	**£49.99**	**AFMinOff**

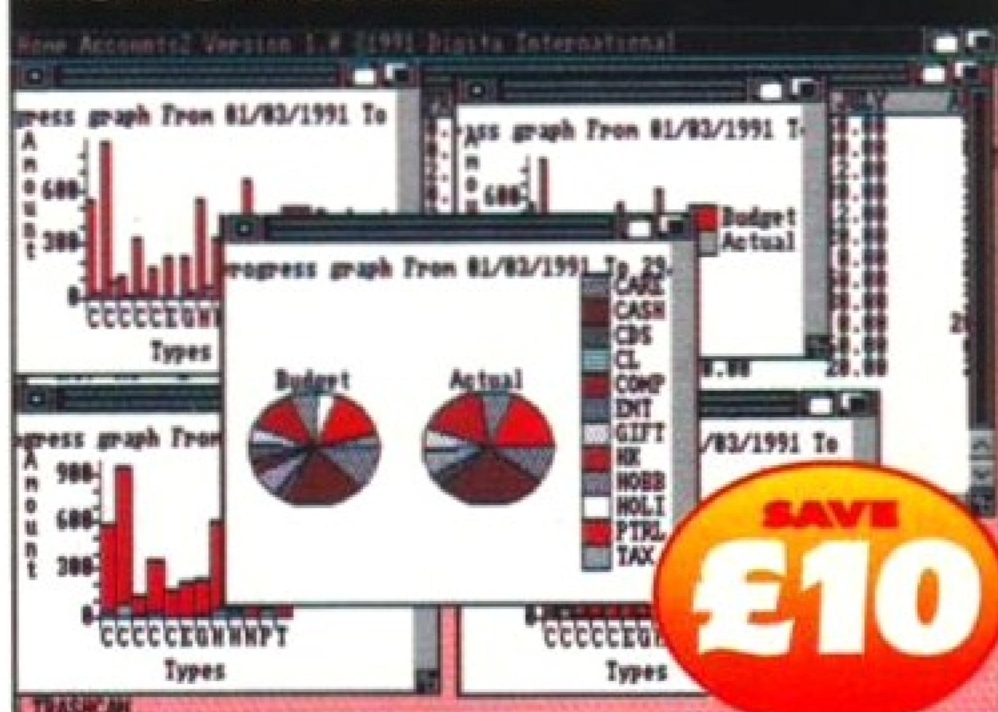
Two Great Games



A fantastic package with Imageworks' *First Samurai* arcade adventure doubling up with another *Format Gold*-winning game: *Mega-lo-Mania*, the Godlike strategy game from Sensible Software.

Description	Price	Order Code
Two for one	**£24.99**	**AFMegSam**

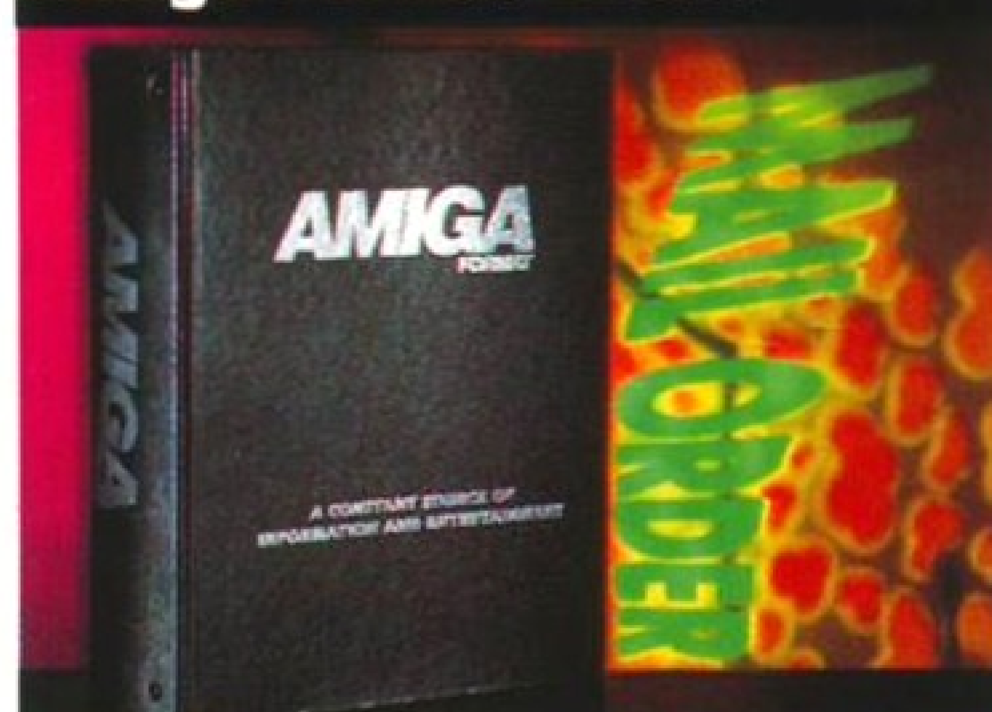
Home Accounts 2



Described by ***Amiga Format*** as 'a package which will suit any household', this is the ideal way to keep track of your financial affairs, from what's in your cheque account to how much is left after the bills!

Description	Price	Order Code
Home Accounts 2	**£44.99**	**AF229**

Amiga Format Binder



Are you tired of all your ***Amiga Formats*** being left scattered all over the floor? If so, protect them with these stylish and practical black-and-silver binders.

Description	Price	Order Code
One binder	**£4.95**	**AF108**
Two binders	**£9.00**	**AF109**

StereoMaster



This update of Microdeal's *MasterSound* is an ideal entry-level sound sampler. Its numerous features, and improved easy-to-use graphic interface make it an excellent bargain for budding music freaks.

Description	Price	Order Code
StereoMaster	**£29.99**	**AF234**

Amiga Format Mail Order

New Technosound Turbo



Newly updated sampler from New Dimensions enables you to grab digitised sounds, then sequence them into simple compositions. It contains a new cartridge, updated manual *and a* set of audio leads.

Description	Price	Order Code
Technosound Turbo	**£29.95**	**AF246**

Award Winners Compilation



What a combination! *Format Gold* ground-breaker *Populous*, stunning footie fun in *Kick Off*, the cartoon-on-a-disk *Space Ace* and the top-class puzzle game *PipeMania* all rolled into one great package!

Description	Price	Order Code
Award Winners Comp	**£20.99**	**AF245**

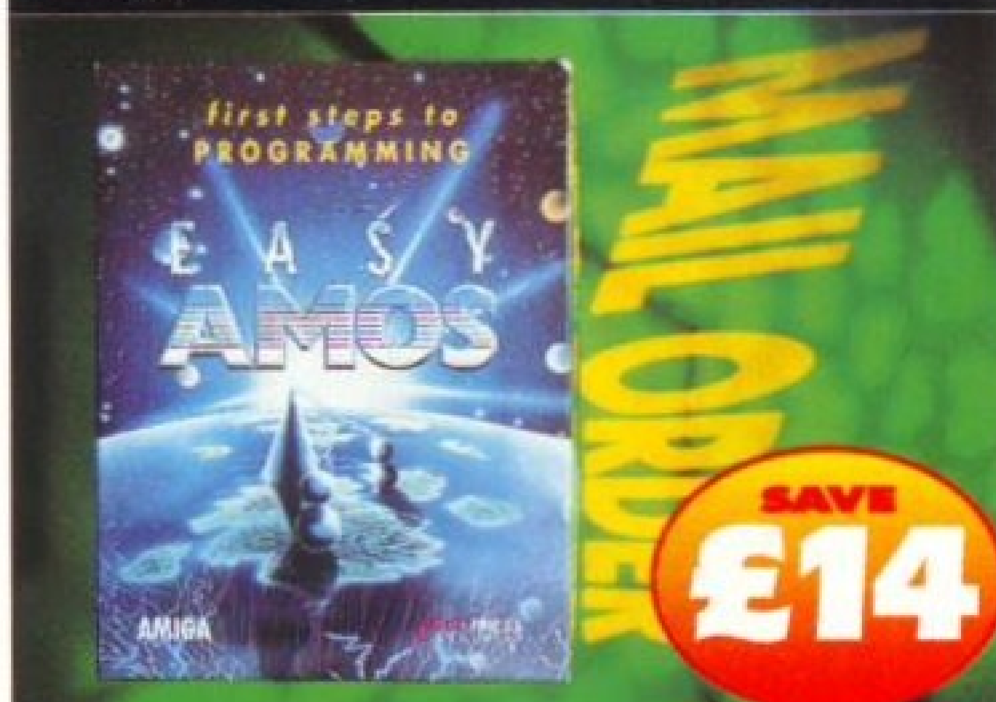
10 Great Games Comp



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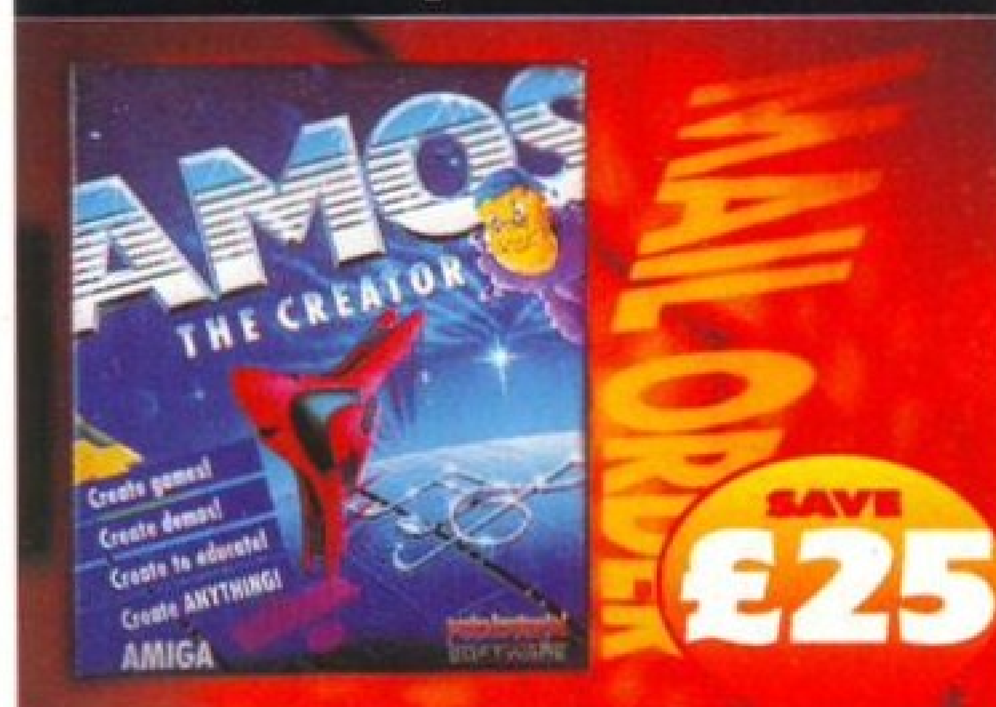
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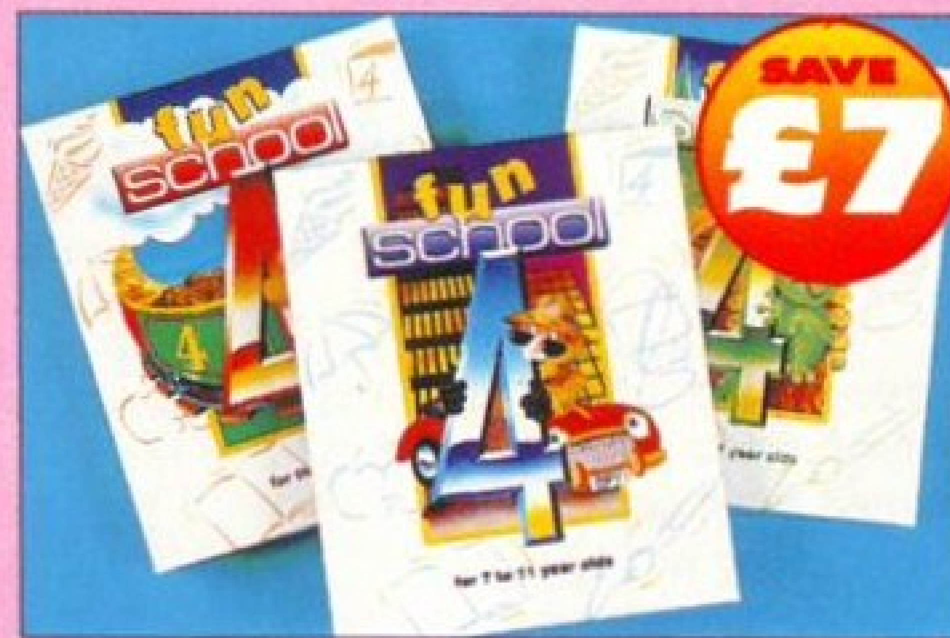
It comes with a battery-backed-up clock, so you need never set the time again. More and more software is being produced now that will only work properly if you have a one megabyte machine: and if you don't have an expansion, then you're also missing out on the complete full-price programs that are part of the ***Amiga Format*** Collection, like *Vista*, brought to you on Coverdisk 33, *PageSetter* (Coverdisk 34), *Spectracolor* (35), *CanDo* (36) or Issue 38's excellent *IntroCad*. So now you can expand your mind and your Amiga. Get upgraded!

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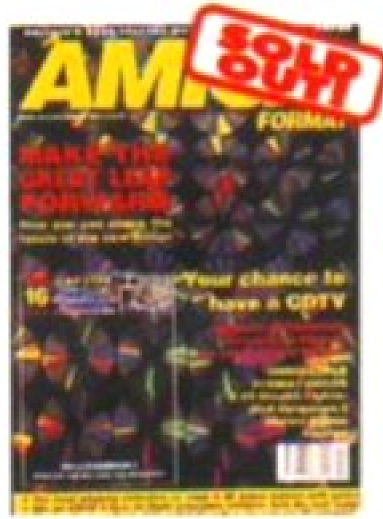
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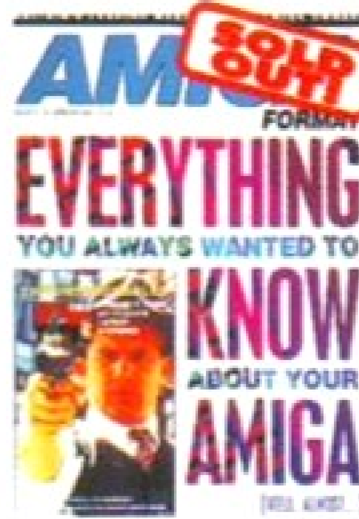
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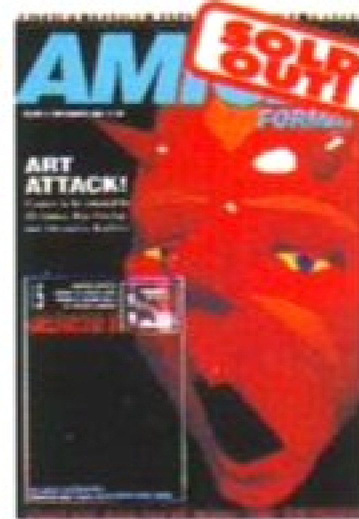
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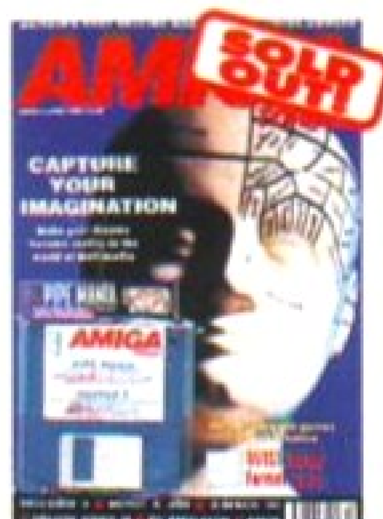
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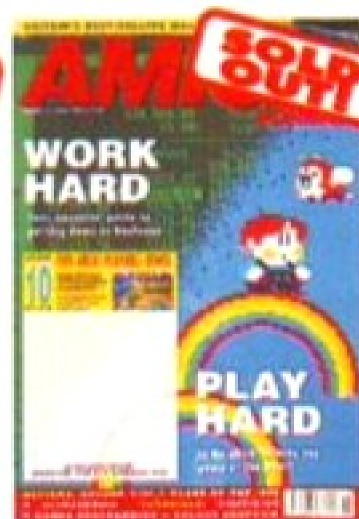
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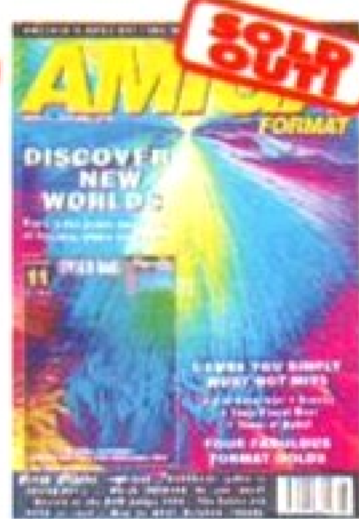
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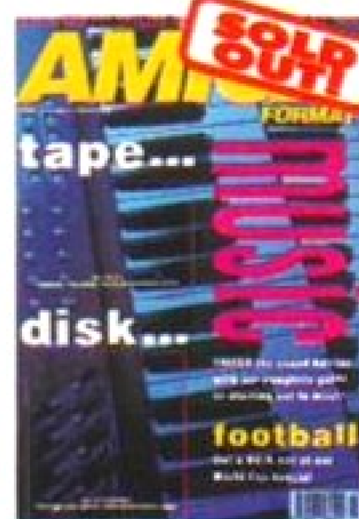
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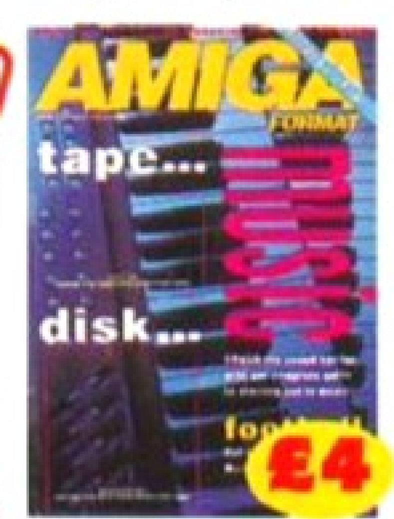
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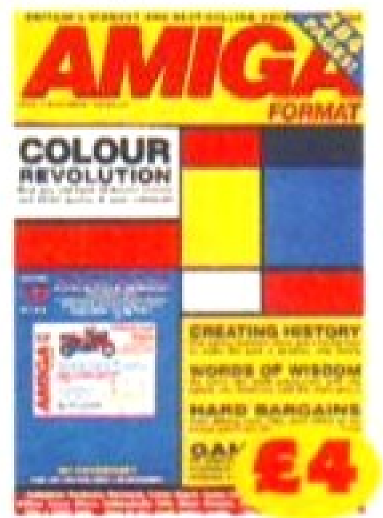
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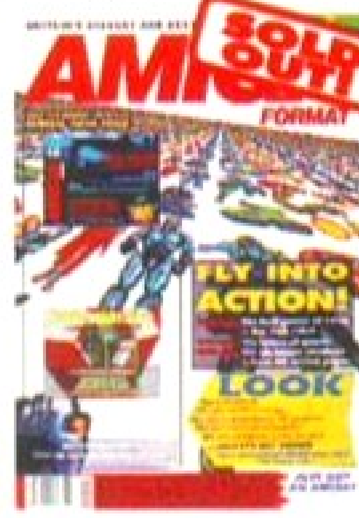
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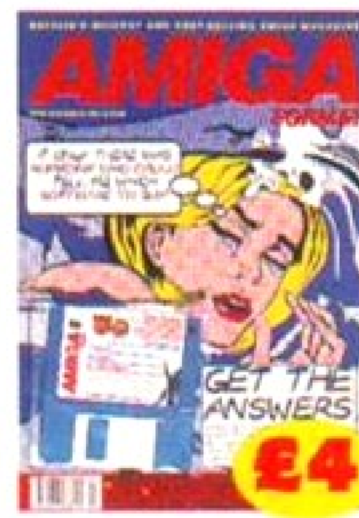
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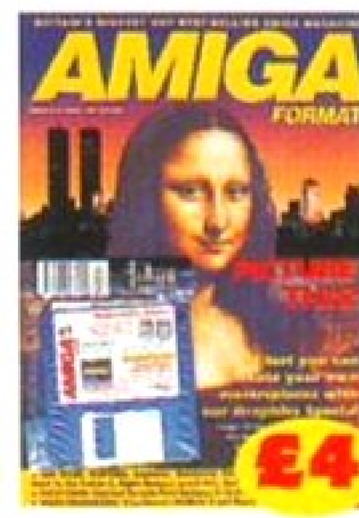
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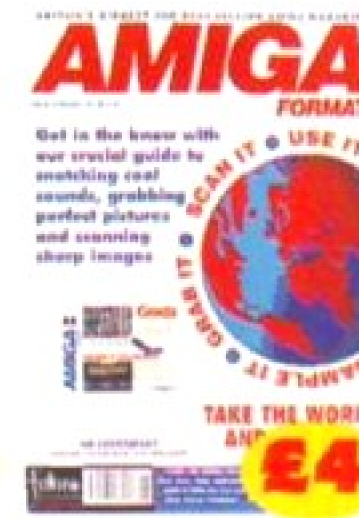
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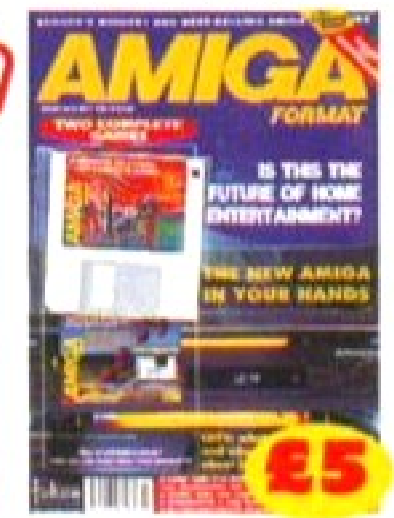
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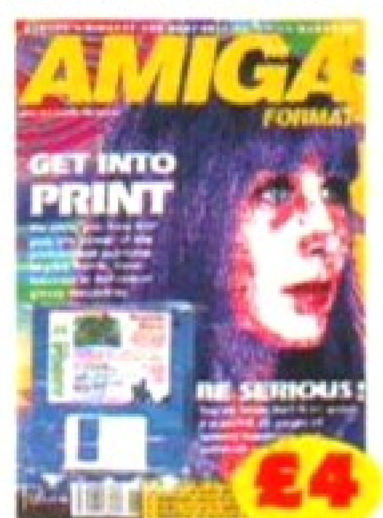
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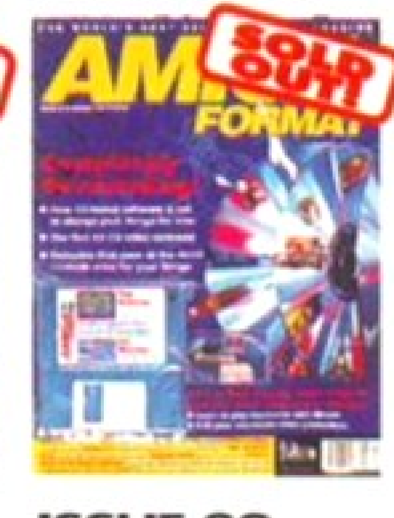
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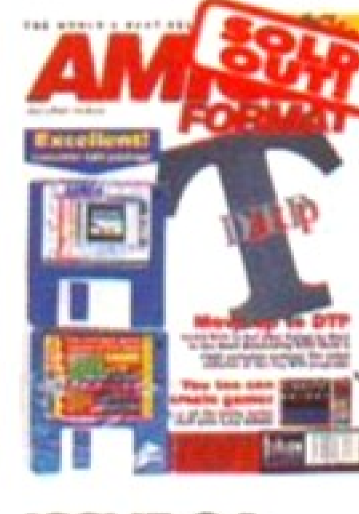
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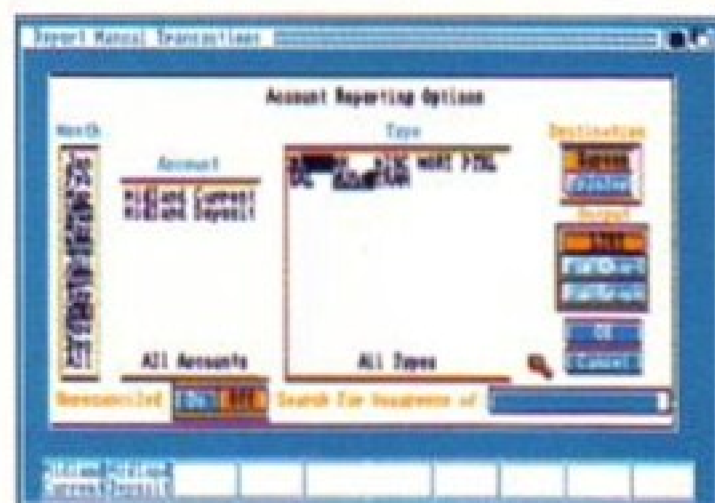
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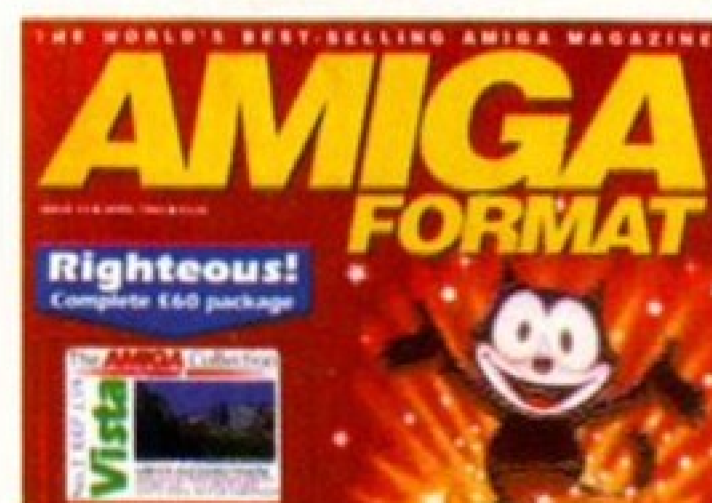
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Workbench

Readers' queries of a technical nature, answered by our resident CLI command **Pat McDonald**.

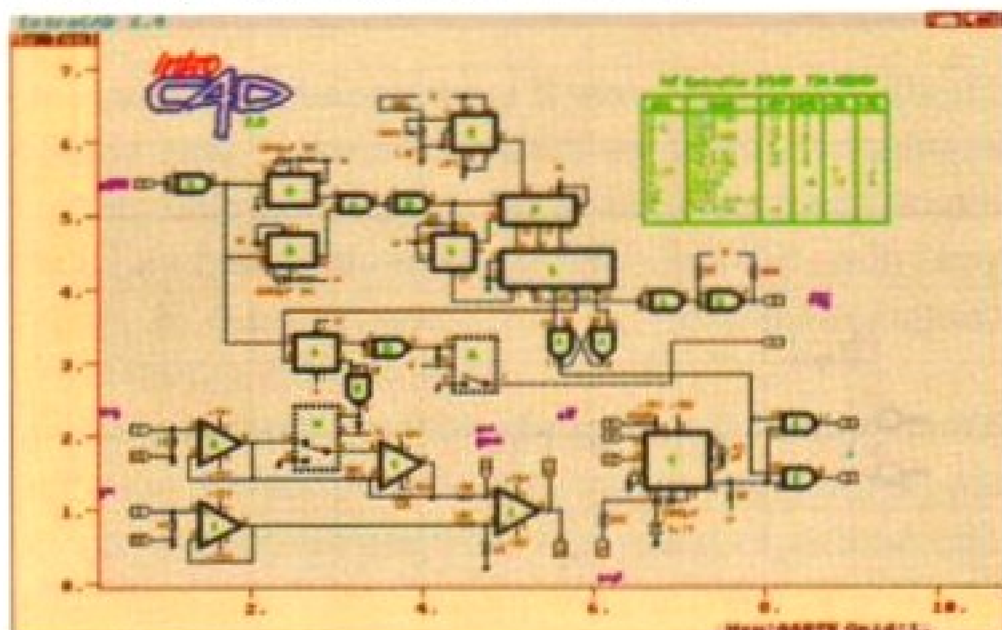
INTROCAD UNZOOM

FROM: JEFF 'WHAT SIREN' BALL, DHAHRAN

Just a quick note to let you know what you're missing out on with *IntroCAD*. Next time you select Zoom, try double clicking the left mouse button without moving the mouse. See, it does zoom out! Make sure that the pointer is positioned where you want it to be in the centre of the screen.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank PD Soft for posting the quite excellent *DynaCadd* demo to Saudi, and to moan at the local religious lunatics who take to my issues of the magazine with a black felt pen. Catwoman? More like Cutwoman.

Thanks, not just to you Jeff but to all the people who noticed how to Unzoom on *IntroCAD*.



For all those people who have stumbled around with the Fullpict option, *IntroCAD* can unzoom!

SHOULD I STAY...

FROM: D STUBBS, SOUTHAMPTON

I own a brand new Amiga 1500 Plus (Workbench 2 etc). This has replaced my Atari STE for nearly all my computer needs, including the MIDI side, but I need to expand it now so that it will be powerful enough for my future requirements. In particular I want to move my DTP and programming work on to the Amiga. I had decided to buy the GVP G-Force 030 40Mhz processor card and add my own 200Mb hard disk.

I know Commodore are releasing a new machine for 'Power Users' but I am a little concerned about losing my investment. I have seen little from Commodore to quell these fears, hearing them say 'Well if the users are dedicated to us they won't mind throwing away their old machine and buying the new'. I say 'Forget it! I'll buy a PC!'

So to my questions:

1) If I buy the GVP card, will I be able to upgrade my current machine to the new AA chipset?

I can't really give you a straight answer to this question. Remember that the existence of the AA chip set (giving more colours and better sound to the Amiga) is still officially denied. It might be possible to upgrade machines to the new standard, if it does exist.

2) If not, will I be able to use the GVP board in the new machines?

Almost certainly not. I honestly don't think that the new Amigas will be able to take many of the internal expansions of the A1500/A2000 series, and of these processor cards are the least compatible contenders.

3) Will I be able to trade in my A1500 for a brand new type?

Almost certainly yes. Even if there is no 'official' offer, many computer dealers do trade-ins. I advise you to hold on for a little while longer, and see how the different systems compare. An A1500 with a 25MHz or better GVP card is going to go faster than the equivalent 'pure Commodore' model, even though it may lack some of the new whizzy screen modes.

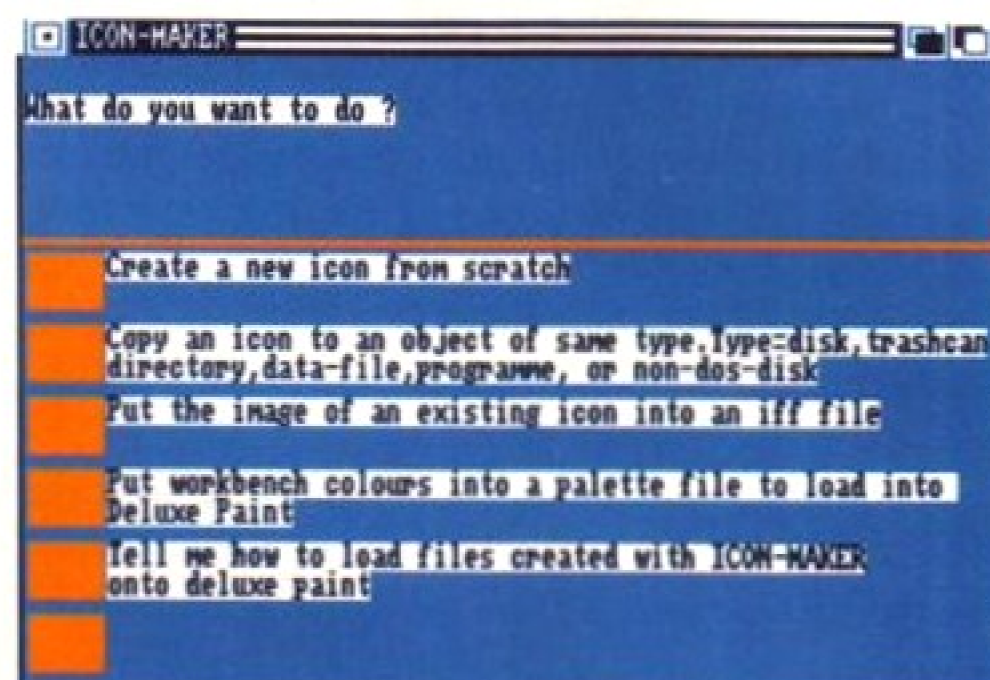
BLANK DISK

FROM: PETER DUNSTAN, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE

For the first time I decided to buy some PD disks for my A500. All but one of them works fine. The odd one out is called *Business Letters*. When this disk has loaded into my Amiga, there are no icons, except for the Trashcan which is empty. The disk has got files on it, which I can list with a quick Dir. What I would like to know is:

1) How do I get into these files if they don't have any icons?

You use Shell. Most PD software is archived on a disk as a single, massive file (like *Legend of Valour* on this month's Coverdisk). To get it off again, some delving



***Icon Maker* is donkey's years old, but it still remains a viable choice for turning IFF files into icons.**

through the Shell or CLI is necessary – you may be able to do a quick Dir, but can you copy, format, and rename? Can you de-archive using *LHA* or *PKZip*?

Don't be deterred – if the contents of the PD disk in question are just a load of business letters, then surely you should be able to load them into any old word processor. If they are archived with either of the above programs, then the programs (and especially the documentation for them) should be on the same disk.

2) Can I make up icons to put on to the disk?

You should be able to, if you are conversant with a good icon editor like *IconEd*, *IconMaster* or *IconMeister*. The tricky bit is knowing which files do what – and only experimentation through the Shell (try TYPEing some of the files) will give you the knowledge you seek.

Workbench 2 is very useful in this situation, because by double clicking on disk and selecting All Files from the show menu, every file on the disk is given an icon. The type of icon given depends on the type of file, so you can even type in arguments to a CLI command. A neat feature – upgrade now if you want it.

HIGH SPEED SAMPLING

FROM: MARL TYRRELL, WENDOVER

I've found a way to fit a longer sound into the same amount of memory. Copy the sound to tape first, and either press Play and Fast Forward or (assuming you've got it) use a high-speed dub facility.

Sample from the high-speed tape – you may need to keep the tape pressed down at one corner for it to play at all. Then using your sampler software (I prefer *AudioMaster*) retune the sample to a reasonable rate. It sounds silly but it does work!

Indeed it does, but the sample quality will not be brilliant. However, this process is useful for simple backing loops though, where a couple of real instruments are being played.

If the sounds you are sampling` are too complex, and the sample is too long, you will still run into the knotty problem of whether to sacrifice sample length for quality or vice versa.

Continued overleaf

TUNING MODULATORS

FROM: MARTIN TRUSTY, BATTERSEA

£50

Since the frequency of Channel 5 on the UHF is now officially the same as computers and videos, I plucked up the courage to look inside my modulator. After prising it open I found four adjustment screws.

All you have to do is adjust the Coarse adjustment, then turn on your TV and select an unused channel. Tune the TV as best you can to the computer, and then use the fine tune on the modulator to get you the best possible picture.

If you are using a video recorder with the same TV as your computer, it makes sense to readjust both so that they don't clash with each other or with the new TV channel.



The screw at the corner is the coarse adjustment – the screw next to it is the Fine adjustment.

And there you have it – don't worry about losing the warranty on the modulator because it isn't screwed together. Just tug it at both sides and it comes apart quite easily. Have a £50 mail-order voucher.

TOOTHPICK FIX

FROM: TERRY DOOHER, LEICESTER

A few months back, my internal drive died. Normally it clicks every three seconds to check for a disk being inserted, but it stopped doing that. Which meant that the machine never knew it had a floppy disk in it unless I booted with that disk – so two-disk games were out, as was serious software because I couldn't save to a different disk.

Seeing as my warranty had run out a long time ago, I took the machine apart and removed the disk drive. I discovered two pins, just inside the slot where you insert a disk and on the left-hand side. One of them was stuck down. I assumed this was the problem and poked at it with a screwdriver. It shot out again and my drive has been working fine ever since.

A friend of mine had a similar problem with the outer sensor of his drive – the write-protect sensor, not the disk sensor. It had snapped off, so write-protected disks were still vulnerable to viruses. I just replaced the pin with the end of a toothpick, and his drive works just fine now.

Loath as I am to advocate poking a screwdriver into the Amiga, the sensors on floppy disk drives commonly go wrong and can actually be fixed using the above methods.

COLLECTING UTILS

FROM: D BATEMAN, YORK

Is it possible to put frequently used software (like a collection of utilities) on to a ROM chip? What sort of hardware and software would be needed to use such a ROM chip?

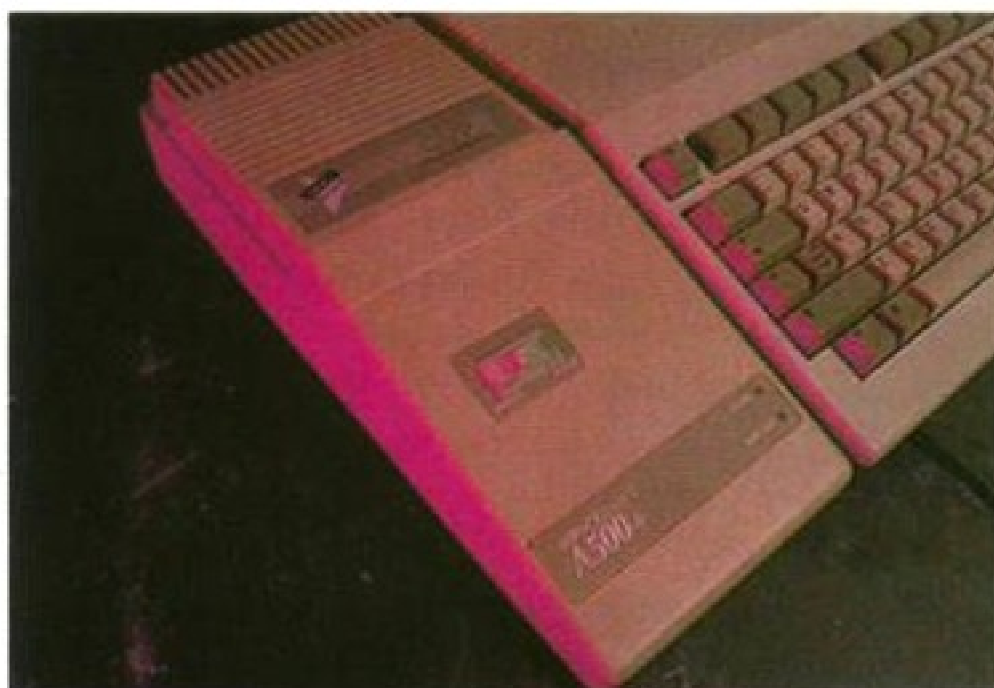
It is technically feasible, but it doesn't make financial sense. Freezer cartridges like the Action Replay III are collections of utilities burnt on to a ROM and wired into an Amiga, but these are mass produced. If you were to sit down and do your own ROMs, the cost would be far higher than a hard drive, which does much the same job but can store much more than a ROM chip.

What sort of difference in speed does ROM shadowing make?

It depends on how often the software you are using makes use of ROM routines. When and if it does, the information will come out of a shadow ROM at least twice as fast as from the built in ROM chip. Or in other words: a lot of difference for most serious programs, and not a lot for most games.

Why is building your own hard drive just as expensive as buying a GVP Series II?

Again, it comes down to mass production. If you were making 100 hard drives, rather than just one for yourself, then you could get the bulk order discounts that make hardware manufacturers possible. This isn't confined to hard drives – for instance it's not that easy to make a sound sampler for less than the cost of a ready-built one.



The GVP Impact Series II – it's still the best pure hard drive expansion for the A500 series.

PORTING UP

FROM: SAX JARRITT, CHICHESTER

Can you tell me if it is possible to get an Amstrad PCW9512 to communicate with an A500? I want to port some *LocoScript* files from the PCW to the Amiga, for use in a DTP program.

I have had such conflicting advice that I am reluctant to buy an interface for the Amstrad which is an otherwise redundant machine.

Maybe, but it's the cheapest way, unless you want to do a lot of retyping. Buying an RS232 interface for your PCW and a comms program (*Mex* was pretty good, from what I remember of CPM) plus a comms program for the Amiga (*NComm*) and a null modem cable is the surest way to do it.

Finally I want to know if I can use a modem to communicate with other systems or can I just talk to other Amigas? And what happens if the person you dial through the modem has turned their computer off?

You can talk to many, many different kinds of systems, not just Amigas. As for the second question, not a lot. The idea is to make use of electronic mail services, which store messages for their users. When somebody rejoins the service, any new messages are sent. Practically all services, even the humblest bulletin board, have this facility.

FASTER PRINTING

FROM: JOHN HEDGER, LUTON

I have recently bought a Citizen printer to use with my A500 Plus. As you are probably aware, printing dumps of colour pictures takes an absolute age, and it was while I was waiting for a printout that I discovered something. It's quite amazing how just waving the mouse pointer randomly can lead to some excellent benefits.

STATION SOUND

FROM: JAMES MANNING, SHROPSHIRE

OK, I bought *DeluxePaint III*, and it certainly is a great program, but thing was I couldn't add any sound to my animations. So what did I do? I went out and bought *Disney Animation Studio*, and I was horrified at the speed slow down. I tried in vain to find *MovieSetter* (as used by Eric Schwartz) but never could seem to find a copy.

Spin my nipple-nuts! *Animation Station* on the front cover of *Amiga Format*! Can I truly add sound effects to any of my animations? Arrggghhh! Stop it! What are you doing! You're ruining my precious work! All those hours I spent glued to my computer. I know I shouldn't have been playing with that tube of super glue in the first place but that's not the point. Please God, kill me now.

As you can guess, I was not too pleased with this program's performance. I had given up on it until one day, while playing aimlessly with my animations and the 'View' utility supplied I happened to discover something that has completely changed my life, period.

First, you will need to save your animation on to a formatted disk. On this disk you must include a number of IFF 8SVX 'one shot' sound samples (not multi-octave or RAW binary) that you would like to add to your animation. If you like, put them in a drawer called SoundFX. Then copy the View program from the Coverdisk to your formatted disk. This can be done by dragging the icon via Workbench or by using this at the Shell;

```
Copy AStation:UTILs/View/View.info to Mydisk:
```

Once this is done, you will need to create an audio specification file in the same directory as your animation. This can be done with a text editor or word processor – there is a text editor on Workbench called Ed but it isn't very good. The audio file must have the same name as your animation file, plus an added '.audio'.

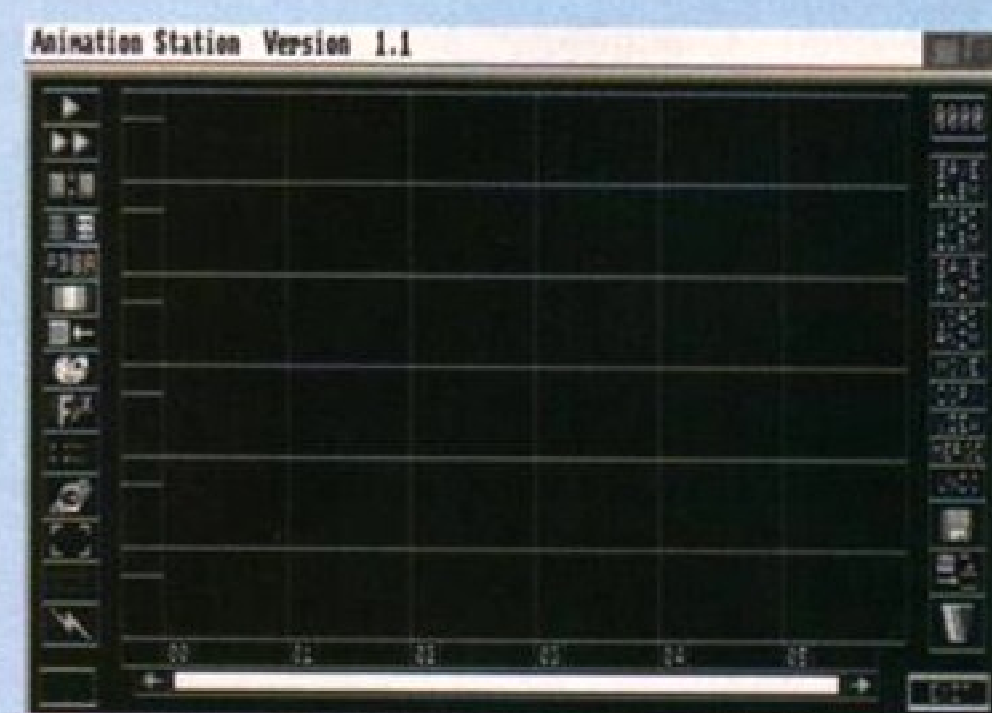
For example, if your animation is called 'MyfirstAnim.anim', then the audio file MUST be called 'MyfirstAnim.anim.audio' or it WILL NOT WORK. Don't forget to omit the quotes, and it doesn't matter whether you upper or lower case (capital or little letters).

The audio specification file must obey the following format:

```
DiskName:Path/IFFSoundFileName0
DiskName:Path/IFFSoundFileName1
DiskName:Path/IFFSoundFileName2
```

... and so on, ending the list of sound file names with an asterisk.

```
*
NForegroundSoundSeq (ie number of foreground sound frame sequences)
Frame # Sound # (L for Left channel, R for Right) Volume
Frame # Sound # L or R Volume
...
```



***Animation Station*, which comes complete with its own sound scripting system. You learn something new...**

```
NBackgroundSoundSeq (ie number background sound frame sequences)
Frame # Sound # L or R Volume
Frame # Sound # L or R Volume
....
```

Here's an example of a complete file.

```
Mydisk:SoundFX/Boing
Mydisk:SoundFX/Engine
*
2
0 0 L 64
15 0 R 32
1
0 1 L 20
```



Even this quite splendid Citizen Printer will slow down if a complex graphic screen is displayed on the Amiga.

Anyway, while printing, if you click and drag the menu bar down on *DeluxePaint IV* (drag it right down so that it's off or nearly off the bottom of the screen) the printhead doesn't pause for so long. In fact, it pauses for less than half the time that it normally takes.

I suspect that this phenomenon is due to the Amiga not needing to display a complex graphic screen. I also suspect that this speeds up all processing, not just printing graphics, although I can't seem to prove this yet. I hope other AMiga and Citizen users can benefit from this tip

Yes, it comes down to contention between the processor (68000) and the video chip (Denise). If a displayed screen has more than 16 colours – uses more than four bitplanes – then the Denise has priority, and so the machine actually slows down. There is a much easier way to hide the screen though – simply press the key to the left of the spacebar, and N or M. This will toggle the machine between displaying Workbench and your program.

Continued overleaf

This is what happens. At frame 0, the example will play sound 0 (Boing) through the left speaker at maximum volume, namely 64.

At frame 15, sound 0 is played through the right speaker at half the maximum volume, namely 32.

There is one background sound in this animation, which is sound 1 (Engine). It starts on frame 0 and plays in the left channel, with a volume of 20.

Valid frame numbers are 0 to one less than the total number of frames in your animation. If the frame number is bigger than this, the sound will not play.

Valid sound numbers are 0 to one less than the total number of sounds you are using. If you use a sound that doesn't exist, then it won't work.

Valid channels are L for left and R for right. Valid volumes are 0 (off) to 64 (the loudest). Background sounds start up the first time the desired frame appears, and loop continuously until the end of the animation.

And there you have it. A prize is now on its way for your unstinting efforts. You will of course need to use a text editor or word processor to write this kind of audio file (and many others) file – *Memacs* on some Workbench Extras disks will do at a pinch, but there are some quite excellent shareware alternatives like *TextEngine*. If you've any similar tips then send them in.

Techno Babble

Do you know how to talk techie speak? Well if you don't then this little bit of jargon busting should sort you out!

Accelerator: hardware expansion that gives your Amiga a faster CPU. Often used with maths-intensive software where a standard processor is too slow, for programs called 'raytracers' which literally trace the rays of light which bounce around a scene to produce a picture. Also used to considerably speed up flight and other kinds of simulations.

Anim Brush: a brush is a small section of a graphic screen, cut out with a paint program like *Deluxe Paint*. Anim brushes are different small images with the same dimensions – for instance, a bird flapping its wings or an eye blinking.

Blitter: BLock Image TransfER device. Used for copying large areas of memory from A to B, or to combine different areas into one single image. Widely used to generate large graphic shapes in computer games.

Bridgeboard: Commodore's own IBM emulating device, featuring a complete PC computer on a single card. Only fits A1500 and above machines – enables use of standard PC cards.

Chip RAM: memory accessible by the custom chips (Paula, Agnus, Denise) as well as the processor. Used to store all graphics and sounds. Can be used by programs too – with speed slow downs.

CLI: Command Line Interface. The program which enables you to type commands into AmigaDOS for standard operations like copying files or getting a directory. Shell is more commonly used now.

Copper: Co-processor. Used to generate subtly coloured backgrounds – this device built into the Agnus chip can alter colours while the screen is being generated. Executes instructions at the same time as the processor.

CPU: Central Processing Unit. The decision-making chip, the one that tells everything else what to do. It can be interrupted by custom hardware if its programs are in Chip RAM.

Fast RAM: memory that's only accessible by the processor. Programs stored here run faster than those in Chip RAM – hence the name.

Frame grabber: device for capturing live video data and converting it into computer picture data. Doesn't require a still video signal. Usually gives much better results than a video digitiser, which does the same job, except that the video must be paused.

Freezer cartridge: quasi-legal device for examining programs while they are running. Usually with many useful built-in utilities which help overshadow its dubious origins.

Hard drive: basically a big disk for keeping Workbench and all the serious software that you use. Works much faster than a floppy disk. More and more games are becoming installable on to a hard drive.

IFF: Interchange File Format. A standard way of storing pictures and sounds, invented by Electronic Arts and adopted by Commodore. A single standard – practically all art programs can load and save pictures in this form.

Kickstart: the name of the set of programs which are run when the Amiga is turned on. Also contains many library functions for use by programmers. Latest release is Kickstart 2.04. Other releases; 1.3, 1.2, 1.1.

PD: Public Domain. Literally, software that is the property of everybody. PD disks can be freely copied by anyone, and you can also distribute them to whoever you want. The correct term is 'Freeware'. 'Shareware' (try before you buy) and 'Licenseware' (commercial and non-distributable) also come under the same rough heading.

ROM: Read Only Memory. Memory that cannot be altered. Widely used as the starting programs for computer systems that have just been turned on – ROMs remember things permanently.

RAM: Random Access Memory. Memory that can be altered and re-altered many times. Typically, it does not remember what it contains when the computer's power is switched off.

Scanner: hardware device for reading flat pictures from posters, newspapers and so on, and converting them into computer graphics. Often used in desktop publishing to read in previously published images.

Script file: a set of commands which you would otherwise have to type into the CLI or Shell by hand. Saved as a text file. Learning how to use Shell or the CLI involves learning how to write script files.

Shell: more up-to-date version of CLI. Works in exactly the same way, but enables some flexibility in what commands are called via the 'alias' function. Also gives some hot key combinations to enable some editing of previously entered commands.

Sound Sampler: hardware device that converts electrical music signals (typically from a tape or CD player) into computer sound. Can also be used with a microphone to capture live sounds.

Sprite: a graphic object that is independent of the screen. On the Amiga, sprites are limited in size and colours. Typically used for mouse pointers, alien missiles, and so on.

Startup-sequence: the name of the script file, contained in the S directory, which is executed after a disk has booted. Typically contains just the name of a program to auto-run, but can be very complicated. Whatever the nature of the file, it must always be called Startup-sequence and live in the S directory.

Workbench: the set of programs which sets up a graphical 'point-and-click' interface on the Amiga. Much more friendly than the CLI or Shell, but not as flexible. Always has to be loaded from disk, which is slow but does enable much customisation. Workbench 2 requires a Kickstart 2 ROM. Workbench 1.3 requires a 1.3 ROM, 1.2 needs a 1.2 ROM and so on.

Zorro: this the generic name for the Amiga's expansion connector. The A500, A500 Plus and A1000 had the original Zorro 1; the A1500s and the 2000s have Zorro II; and the A3000 has Zorro III. They are not compatible, hence the different expansions for different machines. The new A600 has a PCMCIA connector instead.

MUSE ON

FROM: CLAIRE WILLIAMS, KEMPSTON

I am interested in writing music and will be buying an Amiga later this year. I would like to buy a sequencer and a professional quality package of sound samples, but I only have a vague idea of what I want. I'm not even sure which Amiga to invest in. What do you recommend?

Ideally, a new Amiga. If you buy second hand, the only machine to steer clear of is the old A1000, as it is substantially different to Amigas of today, and it costs a fortune to upgrade to present standards. All machines since then (the A500 and A2000) can be upgraded to Workbench 2 and the ECS. If you want to expand in a big way, an A1500, A2000 or A3000, while expensive in the short term, will save you money in the long run.

However, from the tone of your letter it appears you want a simple setup with one or two sound extras. An A600 at £299 is the absolute bottom line, although an A600HD will load and save your work and programs much faster, because of its built in hard drive.

The compatibility of music software is very good, you see, so you're spoiled for choice, because the standards for music have been much the same ever since the early days of the Amiga. Rumour keeps on pointing (it is still just rumour) of a new Amiga with much better sound and graphics appearing in the near future. Whether or not music software will be compatible with the new standard remains to be seen.

In Issue 37, pages 24-25 you did an interview with Urban Shakedown. In it, both *Med 3* and *Audio Master II* were mentioned. What exactly are these?

Med 3 is a tracker program. These display four or (in the case of *OctaMed* or *Oktalyser*) eight tracks. You can enter sound information into these tracks, in order to build up a song. Each track is split into a number of blocks. If a block is repeated (very common with drum or bass tracks) then it can be repeatedly played.

Audio Master II is a program for recording and editing sound. Although you don't actually need any extras to edit existing sounds, to sample new sounds (take them from the outside world and change them into computer data) you do need some extra hardware – a sampler cartridge, usually just called a sampler. *Audio Master* is the best sampler program for controlling these devices, far superior to the software you get with them.

With both of them, could I link a keyboard up to the Amiga and use it as a dummy, with MIDI?

Well, you could, but you would also need a MIDI interface. This sits in between the Amiga and MIDI instruments, and let's one control the other. So you could write your song on the Amiga and play it through the keyboard, or use the keyboard to play your music and record it onto the Amiga. *OctaMed* or *OctaMed Pro* are much better for MIDI than *Med 3*, by the way. The MIDI interface goes into the serial port, and the sound sampler usually goes into the parallel port. So you can plug both in at once and use them. You can get packs with both gizmos in (like AMAS) but it's generally cheaper to buy them separately.



The Zoom 9030 effects processor is but one of many sound altering gadgets, often found in music stores.

Finally, what is the TechnoSound hardware and the Zoom 9030 effects processor?

Technosound is a sound sampling cartridge, complete with its own software. You need some sampling hardware like Technosound to connect the Amiga to a sound source, and the sampling software (you could use *Audio Master II* instead of the bundled software) tells the Amiga how to take the sound and convert it into computer data.

The Zoom 9030 effects processor is a piece of kit to add effects to sounds – standard effects like reverb, echo, sustain and so on. Similar devices are legion throughout the music world. Effects processors are rarely hooked up to a computer directly – they deal with sound signals, not digital data.

IN SEARCH OF SANITY

FROM: MARTIN J BAILEY, DRIFFIELD

I am considering upgrading my humble A500 to Workbench 2 and 1Mb of chip RAM. In particular I want to try and keep up with the 2Mb chip RAM potential of the A500 Plus and now the A600. The thing is, though, I am left rather confused by all the changes that have been occurring recently in the Amiga market.

I spoke to an Amiga specialist company about upgrading. They suggested it was only possible to upgrade to 1Mb of chip RAM and even this may be a questionable step as the new ability is 2Mb of chip, which leaves people like me high and dry.

That is unless I spend £200 on a new board, which doesn't make sense in relation to the price of a whole new machine. Then I read in your May issue that revision 6 and 7 machines can be expanded to 2Mb of chip RAM, but how do I find out my machine's revision number?



The A570 CD-ROM drive; if you want one of these then 1Mb of chip RAM is a necessity.

To add to the confusion you also said that the A570 CD-ROM drive needs 1Mb of chip RAM, and yet in the September issue, when Kelly Sumner was interviewed he stated that the A570 is aimed at people with at least 1Mb of fast RAM! Help! What are us poor 1.3 owners meant to do?

First, ignore Kelly Sumner because the guy isn't a technical stickler like me. 1Mb of chip RAM is what you need to use an A570. The revision number is written on the circuit board of the Amiga, so you have to dismantle the machine to discover it. Seeing as you have to take it apart to actually fit 1Mb of chip RAM, that's not too much of a problem.

As for 2Mb of chip RAM, while very useful for animators and long samples, it's not a standard feature of any Amiga. Sure, A3000s, A500 Pluses and A600s can have 2Mb of chip RAM without any problem – but they don't come with this fitted as standard straight from the factory.

This is an important point. When professional programmers consider their next release to rake in the millions, they look at the different standards of computer. If most machines have a facility, like 64 colour Extra Half Brite (EHB) mode, then they feel safe in using it. If a facility is comparatively rare, like 2Mb of chip RAM, then they will avoid it.

However, all combined Amiga/CD systems will need 1Mb of chip RAM. This standard was set by Commodore with CDTV, and cannot be altered now. So if you want to use Amiga CD, you need 1Mb of chip RAM. I hope you read that Kelly.

So far, only *Civilisation* has made use of the 1Mb of chip RAM, but even so, there will be far more games appearing which will make use of this extra RAM. I dare say some games will make use of 2Mb of chip RAM. Even so, it will be many months before 1Mb and 2Mb chip RAM machines are in the majority (perhaps 30 per cent or less have the facility at present). Only then will upgrading to this specification be a necessity, as more programmers release products for it.

A600HD MEMORY

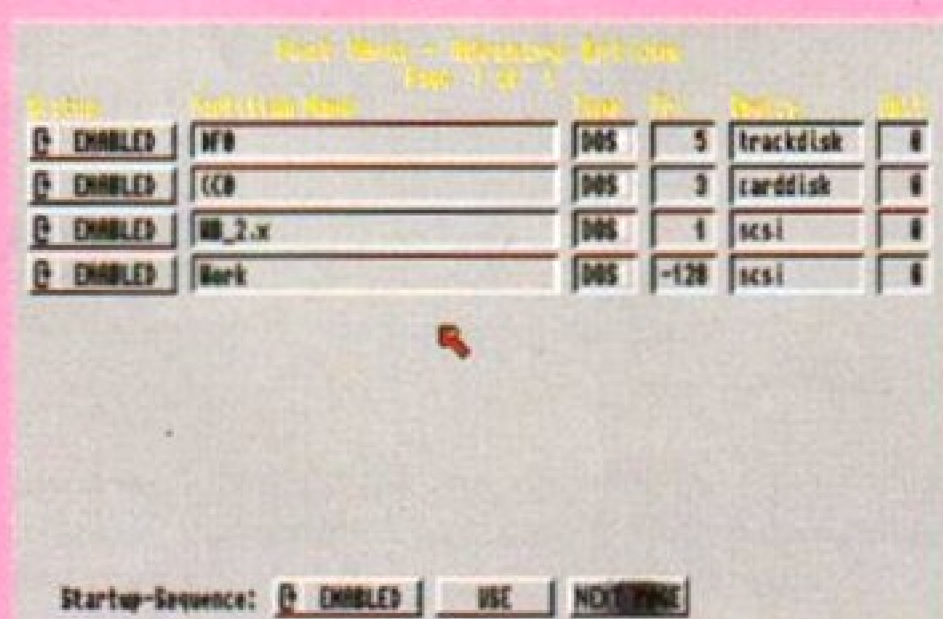
FROM: R POLDING, COLYTON

£50

If you are having difficulties with a 1Mb A600 HD, then read on. The trouble with this machine is that the hard disk takes up a little bit of memory, and so there isn't enough for programs like *Myth* or *Vista* to work.

Just press and hold both mouse buttons when you reset the machine (or turn it on) and the boot selector screen appears. Click on the Advanced Options gadget, and disable the hard disk's partitions (they are factory set to WB_2.x: and Work: although you can call them whatever you want).

Now click on the Use button, placing your disk into the internal floppy disk drive. Finally click on DF0 and it should boot up fine.



The Workbench 2 Boot selector screen is dead handy for deactivating memory grabbing peripherals.

And some people thought the boot selector was a gimmick. That's another £50 voucher. If you think you've got something clever to say why not write in?

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Answerfile

Have you a personal problem? Well if you have ask **Claire Rayner** about it because this page is for Amiga technical problems, period.

Q If I buy a hard disk, will my external disk drive then be redundant?

A Well you will probably use it again. For one thing, it makes life easier when installing programs on to hard disk (less disk swapping). For another, external floppy drives are very handy when copying floppy disks. You probably won't use it so much, but redundant is too harsh a word.

Q Are hard disk drives likely to go faulty? How long do they last?

Not an easy question to answer this one. Hard drives do not usually go faulty within the first years (some do of course). Depending on the environment it's working in, a hard drive should last at least four or five years before dying. Many last much, much longer but that's a realistic average figure.

Let's put it this way: how long does a music cassette last? Although the hard drive is vastly more complex, the basic principle of recording data (by way of magnetism) is the same. Hard drives are also delicate, and you can ruin them just by dropping them, never mind the hot coffee/cig butts/swearing they have to put up with when working with humans.



The GVP A530, more than just a hard drive, but nothing less than brilliant

Q What is the difference between the Series II HD8+ 52Mb hard disk drive and the A530 Combo 40MHz 52 Mb hard drive?

A The former is a hard drive that can take and hold lots of extra RAM for your computer (up to 8Mb to be precise). The latter has much the same in terms of hard drive, but it also contains an accelerator unit, for making your computer perform calculations and decisions much quicker, that is making it go faster. The A530 can also take 8Mb of 32-bit RAM, which works much faster than normal memory but it does need an accelerator.

Both units can have a Mini Slot expansion for taking items like the GVP PC286 PC emulator. More expansions are planned for this, but none have been released yet. When it comes down to it, though, the Series II is a very nice hard drive that doesn't really speed up your Amiga at all. The A530 on the other hand is for people who want to run programs at much higher speeds.

Q You can get the Combo populated with 1Mb of RAM. Could you tell me exactly what this mean?

A Populated means occupied, right? So populated with 1Mb of RAM means that it's got 1Mb of RAM plugged in.

Q I have an A500 Plus. If I bought an A570 CD-ROM drive, would I be able to just plug it in and go, or do I need more memory or something else?

A No, you'll be able to plug it in and go. A500 owners must have 1Mb of chip RAM, but this is standard with the A500 Plus.

Q I read in Issue 38 (September Page 20) about Full Motion Video appearing on the CDTV in the near future and I was wondering if this feature is available on the A570. If not will Commodore bring out a gadget to upgrade the drive to FMV or will that come on a later model?

A Dear oh dearie me. MPEG compression is the heart of moving pictures on computers, but the people in question have only decided on a standard. Nobody is producing chips yet to actually do this sort of thing. It may come out in years to come on the A570 and CDTV. It's vapourware – not on the market yet.

Q I have Kickstart 1.3 and 2, and a sharer board. How do I get my hard drive to recognise which one is in use?

A Here's one I received earlier, from Rob Jaques, Scunthorpe. It's not ideal but it works. Thanks, a £50 mail-order voucher is on its way:

As I haven't seen any proper solutions for people wanting to use both Workbench 1.3 and 2 from hard drives (assuming you also have a ROM sharer and both Kickstart ROMs) here is one that works for me.

You need at least two partitions on your hard drive. Install Workbench 1.3 on to the partition which normally boots (usually DH0:). Install Workbench 2 into any other hard disk partition (eg DH1, DH2).

When you want to use Workbench 1.3, just boot and load as normal. When Kickstart 2 is running, hold down both mouse buttons as you reset or turn on. The boot selector screen will appear. Select the partition which contains Workbench 2, and it should load.

Q At the moment I use a clapped out old dinosaur of a computer. I'm looking for something better. So far I've only looked at Apple Macintosh and IBM 486 PCs but I have been advised to consider the Amiga as a business machine. I will be using it primarily for word processing, spreadsheets, graphs, CAD and DTP.

After buying your *Amiga Format Special* on software I feel that Amiga software appears to be just as good as PC software and a great deal cheaper. It also appears to be possible to add PC and Mac emulator boards, so I could have the best of all three machines.

But the thing is, where do I get the specifications and price lists for Amiga hardware? I want a decent machine, hard disk, memory, decent monitor and so on. Who do I go to?

A If you have no local Amiga independent who stocks and demos 'serious Amigas' then give ZCL a ring on 0543 251275, and they should be able to tell you of a local branch near you who can supply the information that you require. And please do keep buying the magazine to get the latest information.

Q I am thinking about buying an Amiga, but I am not sure if I want an A600, as the edge connector is different to an A500 Plus. So Action Replay and similar expansions will not work. Will there be an Action Replay for the A600?

A Maybe, maybe not. But it's interesting to note two things; first, A500 512K RAM expansions are not widely advertised any more, and A500



Given time the PCMCIA socket may be as well supported as the old A500 edge connector.

Plus/A600 1Mb RAM expansions are becoming more common. So the market is shifting upward for the newer machines, whose owners have no expansions.

When Commodore put the PCMCIA slot on the A600, it wasn't to deny them access to A500 peripherals – that was a side effect, but it wasn't the main purpose. Every sign points to PCMCIA being cheaper and more widespread than any connector so far. So A600 owners should benefit in the long term.

At the moment, the movers and shakers (ie hardware engineers and designers) are still either working on designs or testing prototypes. You can't expect everyone who makes expansions to instantly switch over.

Q Can I plug a Kickstart sharer board and Kickstart 1.3 into an A600, to run software that will not work with Kickstart 2?

A Yes, but you void your warranty, which is rather good with an A600 (someone comes round and fixes it, or takes it away and posts it back). Not really worth it, is it?

Q I am a big fan of flight simulations and I want to buy an Amiga to fly them on. However, I notice that in your review of the A600 there is a problem with them and flight sims. Could you explain it?

A Just about every flight sim uses the computer keypad to get access to the outside views. This is when you're outside the plane, looking at it. As the A600 doesn't have a keypad, you can't see the outside views on any flight sim.

The only exception to this is *Air Warrior*, which does use the keypad quite a lot for the controls. As *Air Warrior* is a modem game, it's expensive and a bit elitist, but great fun. Luckily, it multitasks, so you should be able to run system patch programs to remap the keypad to somewhere else.

Q Is it possible to transfer the hard drive unit from a GVP A500HD to a GVP controller card in an A2000/A1500? It looks simple, unscrewing and dismantling one and plugging the hard disk into the other.

A It does depend to a certain extent on what revision of each unit you are using (older versions don't like having their hard drives swapped without reformatting) but in general yes, no problem.

Q Is there an effective stepper motor control system for the Amiga? I need it for my GCSE project.

A Switchsoft (0325 464423) do one for £27.95, which includes example listings in AMOS (latest version recommended), Amiga Basic and GFA Basic. So, if you have Workbench 2, you will also need one of the above languages on top. If you want to multitask (you say you're running a digitiser too) then GFA would be best, then Amiga BASIC. Amos could produce the prettiest programs though.

Oops. The above motor controller (and all others I've seen) plug into the parrelel port – which is where most digitisers plug in too. The only digitisers that don't are the Datel 'side expansion' type, and they're not very good and they don't multitask. Meta-programming time....

Q What's meta-programming?

A Much the same as programming, except you write a program that controls other programs. It's not the same as pure programming, because you only care about what a program produces and how to control it, rather than writing a program. Typically you use an Arexx script, although Shell is better for multitasking situations.

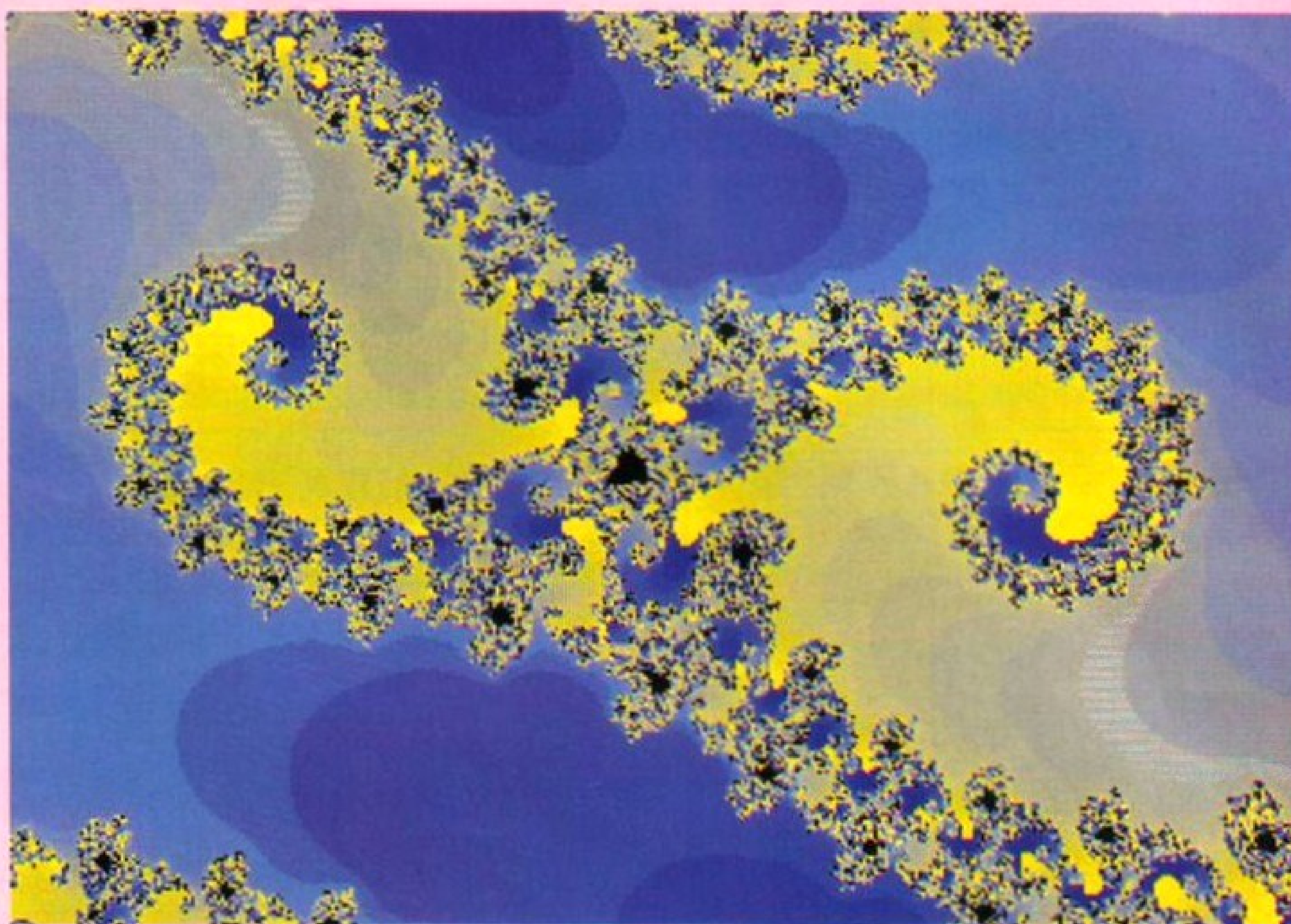
Imagine a situation where you want to digitise a sequence of camera shots, but where you are actually controlling the camera angle with a different program. You want the final result to be an animation, not a sequence of shots.

In Arexx, you write a script to start up the camera control and digitising software, move the camera to the first position, and digitise. The picture is saved to a file, and the camera moves off again. Now you have a choice, you can either do all the frames, or add the pictures together as you go using a utility like *Build anim*.

In Shell, you would do something similar, although it would be much longer and clumsier. Every time you wanted a program to do something, you would have to run it, then close it down. You would need a large number of utilities to maintain it. It would be very slow. Debugging would be very tedious. But the nice thing about meta programs is, when you have got them right, you can happily leave the computer to it.

Sure you want to do this project?

In-depth explanation
No 8: Fractals



In the same way that many grains of sound make a mountain, so fractals are constructed from building blocks which bear some resemblence to the overall shape. To put it another way – how many different spirals can you see in this picture? The correct answer certainly doesn't fit on a postcard.

1 Fractal is short for fractional dimension. The human mind lives in a three-dimensional, solid, filled-in world. Fractals are born in higher mathematics, which can deal with worlds and planes where the dimensions are not always solid units. The only way we can look at a fractal is to see a picture drawn on a monitor or TV.

2 The bloke generally credited with the discovery of fractals (he invented the word) is Benoit Mandelbrot, a world-famous mathematician. His fame grew with the computer age, because he couldn't do a lot except type and write until computer colour graphics were invented. Remember, good graphics = good fractals.

3 That's only half the story though. Mandelbrot spent years running programs through powerful mainframe computers and analysing the results. Fractal programs can be very small – 30 lines of BASIC is ample to see a result. However, they are recursive. This means they have to loop and loop and loop to build up a picture. Remember, powerful computers = fast fractals.

4 The whole point about fractals is that they can closely model some parts of nature. Clouds, sun flowers, DNA and many other natural phenomena can be accurately drawn, with near infinite variation. Scenery generators like *Vista* use fractals to draw landscapes of mountains, hills and rivers.

5 The trouble with fractals is that they are heavily maths based, which naturally puts people off. Books on fractals usually use lots of calculus to explain the theory. However using fractal generating programs is a damn sight easier and more fun than writing the program.

6 So what can you get? *Maths Vision* is one of the more noteworthy releases to date. It draws pretty natural fractal pictures for use in titling or theme shots, and more importantly can generate 24 bit images for commercial cable or broadcast TV.

7 You don't have to break the bank to see good results. The shareware *Scenery Generator* is but one of a host of PD fractal generators. A sad thing that most of them just draw Mandelbrot sets. One other noteworthy title to watch out for is *Mandel Mountains*, by Matthias Ortmann.

8 There's loads of potential for fractals in computer games. *Midwinter* and *Flames of Freedom* both used a fractal map, which could be zoomed in on. In theory, using fractals inside computer games leads to bigger games, as a program to draw a picture is much smaller than the picture it draws!

9 The lightest reading matter that I can recommend to get some insight into fractals is *Chaos* by James Gleick (published by Cardinal). Although of a general nature, it is a fairly easy read, but needs a little pondering over once in a while. In a similar way to *A History of Space and Time* by Stephen Hawkins.

10 The Fractal Geometry of Nature by B Mandelbrot (which is published by WH Freeman) is a much meatier affair, with programs, theory, mind blowing bits and generally a helluva good read. The book *Fractals Everywhere* by Michael Barnsley ISBN 0-12-079062-9 is for the really serious student who wants a course on deterministic fractal geometry. Hope you know some calculus.

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You can be certain of getting your enquiry to the magazine dealt with, but only if you make sure you're addressing your letter to the right person or place.

• We can never give personal replies by mail, so don't send us a stamped-addressed envelope.

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• We are available for enquiries by telephone every Tuesday between 10am and 6pm, and we'll be happy to talk to you then.

• Our advertising department can help with problems concerning companies who advertise in the magazine if you phone during normal office hours.

• Our subscriptions service and the ***Amiga Format*** Mail Order department are not in the same building. They can be contacted on 0458 74011.

WORKBENCH

If you have any problems with the technical side of your Amiga, with hardware or with serious software, Pat McDonald will try to answer you in the mag. Or, if you have any advice for others or any handy tips to share, send it in and you could win a prize.
WORKBENCH, ***AMIGA FORMAT***, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW

GAMEBUSTERS

If you've just found the cheat mode, mapped out the levels or found all the passwords for the latest game, send the info to Maff and you could win a prize. Or, if you're stuck, ask Helping Hand for advice – or solve someone else's problem and win a prize!
MAFF EVANS, GAMEBUSTERS***AMIGA FORMAT***,
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LETTERS

The letters pages are there for you to air your views and share your opinions: please remember not to ask questions that should be in Workbench! Damien is looking for thought-provoking or entertaining letters, the shorter the better. Prizes given for the best two.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, ***AMIGA FORMAT***,
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COMPETITIONS

To enter a competition, write the answers and your name, address and phone number on the back of a postcard or a stuck-down envelope and send it in. You can enter as many times as you wish, but all entries must be posted separately: don't put several entries in one envelope together, or include entries with letters to any other part of the mag.
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Letters

Hello and welcome once again to the bit of the magazine where you get to have a direct say. And, if we're going to be perfectly honest, I get a good chance to make my opinions known as well. Let's take a look and see what issues you lot have been taking an interest in. But just before we do, remember that if you've got any thoughts, ideas or opinions to offer, the address is Letters, **Amiga Format**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. And try to keep it short!

TIPS SCOFF

After praising *Monkey Island 2* so much, why are you determined to ruin your readers' enjoyment of the game? I am referring to the first half of the complete solution in GameBusters (***Amiga Format*** Issue 38). You could at least give information in a reasonably cryptic form, allowing the reader some sense of achievement at completing the game.

Maybe I'm just nostalgic, but I much preferred the early days of the 8-bit computers when tip-writers gave out information sparingly and only in situations where a player was likely to get permanently stuck.

Daniel Johnston, Stourbridge

Let's face it: either you are going to cheat or you are not: it's all down to you. If you do want to cheat, you want real information, not cryptic hints. If you don't want to cheat, you don't read the tips and cheats in the magazine. It seems pretty simple, really.

Another important consideration with a game like Monkey Island *is that the tips inevitably have to be very comprehensive because different people will be stuck on different bits.*

SACK THE MANAGER

I am a keen player of football management games. I would appreciate your advice on the best football management game for the Amiga. Your answer would be gratefully appreciated.

David Pidduck, Broadstairs

Yet again the Amiga-world mirrors real life: There are very few decent football managers to be had in either. At a push, try Graham Taylor's Soccer Challenge *from Krisalis for 'realism' or US Gold's The* Manager *for fun. But, if you're like other managers, you might have a problem deciding which one is right for you.*

BETTER DISKS

I just don't know, or can't count, how many art programs and DTP programs you have put on the front of this mag. People might like them but one art program is like them all, so why don't you put something else on the front?

And I have an idea. Every time, on about page 9, you put 'first back up your Coverdisk'. Every time I buy a game I back it up, but it's costing me a fortune in blank disks and I seem to have millions upon millions of disks, so why don't your programmers invent a utility so you can crush three or four games on to just one single disk and make it simple to use?

I'm sure it won't just satisfy me, but millions of people who have the same problem with having too many disks, because all my mates do.

Jamie Wagland, Nottingham

This month's Amiga Format Collection *just goes to show that we're trying to bring you as many different kinds of software as possible. Here's a run-down of what we've donw to date: fractal landscapes, DTP,*

Continued overleaf

Vision On

Got a picture you're proud of? Send it in, see it in print and win an Amiga Format binder! Since Letters is where you get to contribute your words, we thought it would be the perfect place to see your pics on display too. However your image was created, whether you've sketched it in DPaint or generated it with a ray-tracing package, we'd like to see it. Only the best will make it into these hallowed pages. Send your entries on disk in IFF format to The Gallery, Letters, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



'Butterflies' – JAB, Waterford

HAM painting, multimedia authoring, animation sequencing, CAD, and now a PC-disk-reading utility and a video titling package. I call that extraordinaruy variety and it's not all art programs, even though inevitably a lot of Amiga software is creative.

What worries me more is that you seem to be missing the point about backing-up. It is not simply a matter of storing your Coverdisk for posterity. The idea is that you actually use the back-up – then if something goes wrong with the disk, like it wears out through over-use or gets coffee spilt on it, you've still got the original with the data safe and sound.

If you want to store a few programs on a disk, you can do so with the use of an archiving utility such as LHA *(as used on this month's disk) or* PowerPacker.

CLEVER BOY!

PRIZE

After rushing out and buying the latest ***Amiga Format*** (Issue 38) as usual, I noticed a mistake. On the front cover it says 'Give your 500 Super Power!', yet the keyboard in the background with a Superman symbol on it is in fact an A600 keyboard.

Was this a deliberate mistake? Do I get a prize for having such sharp eyes? Did anyone else notice?

Keep up the good work, your magazine is great and the only one I ever buy.

Nicholas Howell, Margate

Over the art editor Marcus: 'Definitely deliberate, I mean I knew it wasn't an A500, it said A600 on top of it for a start, and it was small and cheese shaped. But we firmly believed nobody would be smart enough to sopt the difference and you, Nick, are the FIRST of 160,000 A500 owning readers who spotted it. A prize? Yes I think a prize or two is well in order.

You've won... an **Amiga Format** *T-shirt, a garden gnome, three plastic native-Americans, the photograph we scanned for* **Amiga Format** *Issue 27' cover and two free tickets to the Future Entertainment Show.'*

Do any of the rest of you have any observations about deliberate errors we may or may not have made in the last few issues? Send them into the usual address and we'll see how far the largesse extends.

AND NOW... THE ADS

I read with great interest your September news report 'Product Placement: the ad cash rolls in'. Just recently many people have been concerned over whether software developers will continue to produce many good quality games for the Amiga when they could make more producing cartridge games.

The home computer is becoming more and more of a popular medium today and is starting to slowly edge television out as the most popular medium. So it makes sense to do what television has been doing for as long as I can remember. Advertisements! I know that like many others I spend much more time on my computer than I do watching TV as I find television boring.

Some may argue that corporate sponsorship will produce lower quality programs, but most likely the opposite will occur. Game developers will have to compete with other software houses to get the best corporate sponsorship and the most cash. With this sponsorship they won't have to worry about whether or not their game sells large amounts and will be able to splurge a bit.

Of course problems will always come up between the software company and corporate sponsor, but nothing I'm sure won't be worked out.

The sponsor will benefit from this too. First, it will be able to target certain audiences by the type of software and put the appropriate ads with that knowledge. Also, even if many of the program copies are pirated, just as many people will see the advertisement as if each copy was acquired legally and lastly it could possibly reduce the price of games due to the sponsorship.

I know that many people get sick and tired of commercials on television let alone on a computer game, but, hey, if it saves the computer industry I'm all for it. Could it be the saviour of the computer games industry? Only time will tell.

Brad Arndt, Ontario, Canada

Interesting. But paying for ad time would be a bit of headache, as would picking the right product – you wouldn't want to your fish finger product to be advertised along a popular character such as James Pond. As for the potential drop in price because of sponsorship, I can't see it myself.

ROM NOT SAFE

I'm sorry to be the harbinger of misery and all that but Stephen Crofts' letter on ROM cards piracy was not entirely wide off the mark. The current rumour on the street as far as pirates are concerned is that ROM cards, complete with on-card hardware protection, are not going to be that much of a problem.

Over the past year or so I've seen a cracked copy of the original Action Replay cartridge, *CDTV Lemmings*, and *CDTV Sim City*, so ROM-Card software, though I hate to admit it, looks like going the same way. Even *Robocop III* was doing the rounds while the programmers were telling you how chuffed they were with the dongle protection code.

Possibly the only way forward is to use CD-ROM to its maximum potential. With 500+Mb on every CD-ROM I can't see anybody wanting to waste that many blank disks on a single game, for this reason alone it looks like *CDTV Trivial Pursuit*, on two CDs, will never be pirated. Even hard disk owners would be unwilling to give up so much room for just one title, no matter how pretty the pictures are.

ROM cards, however, with their 4Mb overhead (unless I've missed something somewhere) are just ripe for copying. After all, if the number of disks denoted a game's worth, then *Monkey Island II, Heimdall, Willy Beamish, Guy Spy* and a host of others would never have made it off the starting block in the first place.

Looks pretty bleak, doesn't it? Is this why Commodore are anxious to promote CD technology, to keep their machines alive? Full marks to the producers of *CDTV Trivial Pursuit* for producing a program that is not only uneconomical to pirate but shows off CDTV to it's fullest. I'm waiting for the day when a CDTV title makes it into the top 30, and as soon as it does, I'm selling up and buying one for myself.

Finally, back to Mr Crofts' letter, cards on the consoles most definitely ARE piratable, so how long before the console market starts suffering the same piracy problems as everybody else?

Anon

Essentially, all I have to say to this letter is that you are quite right. Add in the fact that CDs are enormously cheaper to make than cards and you soon see that CD is the way to go. It could be as soon as this time next year that all new games are published on CD. Which is going to makle next year very, very exciting indeed.

SPEED DEMON

PRIZE

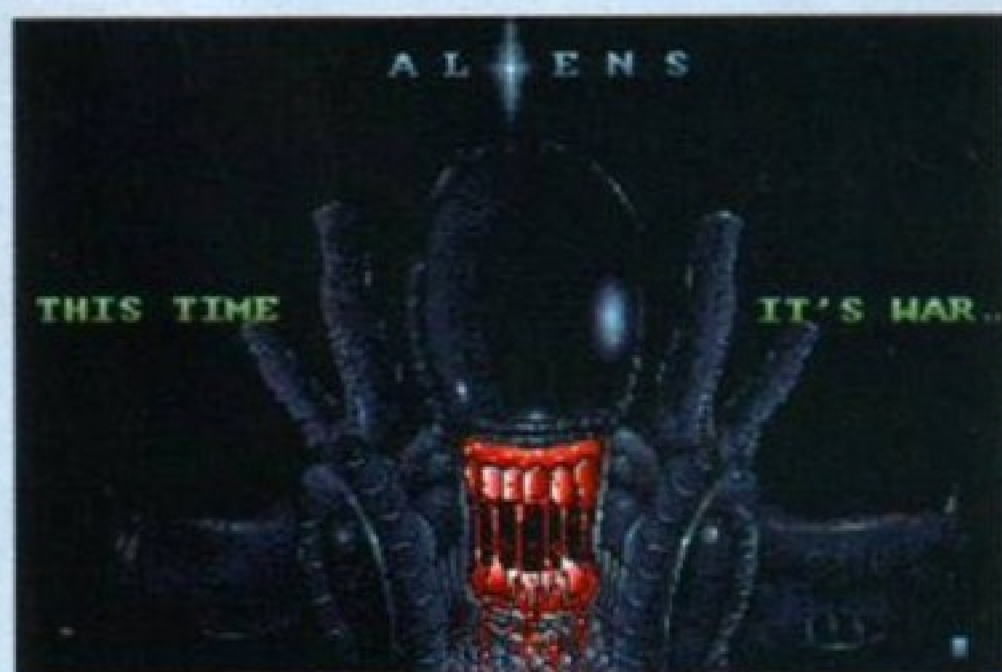
Forget about the 68020. This chip was obsolete years ago. It offers little improvement over a 14 MHz 68000 (in terms of speed) and is almost as expensive as a 68030. Commodore will not be producing any Amigas with this chip (I hope).

Outright, your best current value in accelerators for a 2000/1500 is a GVP G-Force 40MHz. This board comes with a 68030/68882 with 4 megs of 32-bit RAM (expandable) and a fast SCSI controller. As of August, it's being sold for an incredible price of $999 (£625) by various mail-order houses in the US. A500 owners should look into a GVP A530 – it has similar laudables (and no, I'm not a GVP employee).

Finally, and most importantly, all you guys at ***Amiga Format*** and in the British programming community seem ignorant of some basic facts about what drives the sales of accelerators.

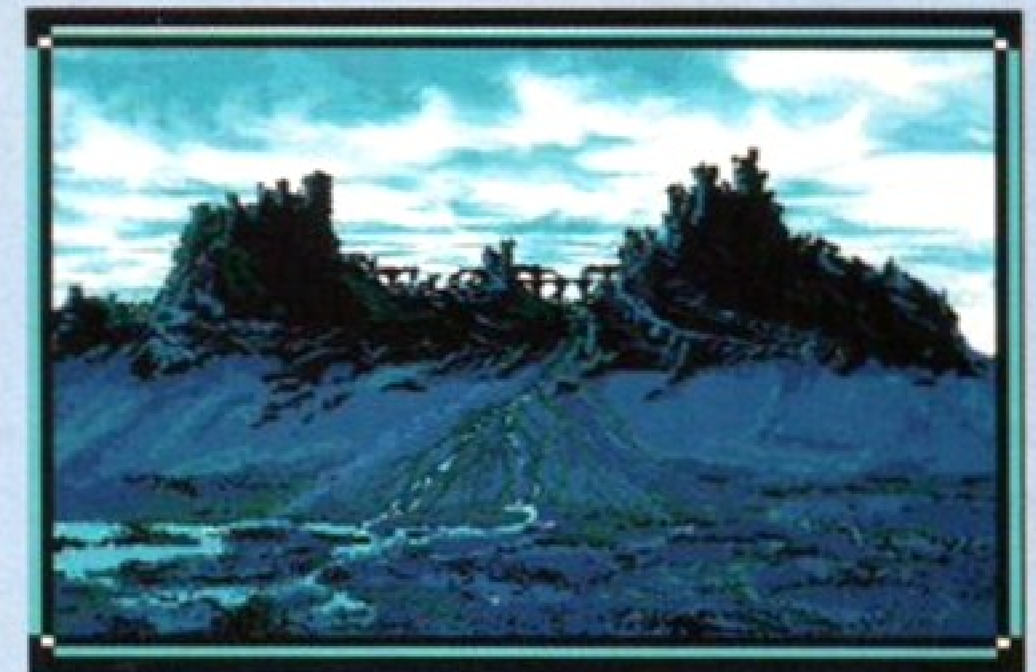
In answering a question about why flight simulators don't take advantage of accelerated Amigas, you answered 'because there aren't that many accelerators out there'. This is correct, but misses the point. It is the program that takes advantage of a 68030 which creates the sale of accelerators. Do you think the reason why so many IBM '486 machines are being sold is to make

Continued overleaf



'Aliens' – Martin Revell


'Marble' – Ben Peters, Sheffield


'Night Ruin' – Nigel Hunter, Loughborough

MARKETING FORCES (1)?

Saddest sight of 1992? It had to be yesterday whilst visiting my local branch of Dixons Photographic.

I was met with the curious sight of the new Commodore A570 CD-ROM Drive sitting next to… the Amiga 600!

Neither of these new products being compatible with one and other – yet being displayed together! Don't blame Dixons, they only show what they stock. No, blame… Commodore Marketing. For only they could release a new product for a machine which you can't buy anymore.

With this sort of 'retail strategy' then, is it really any wonder why prospective new customers are confused? And consequently, why Amiga sales figures are 'below optimum potential? All foreseeable. All avoidable.

Ho hum!

Bruce Turner, Ripley

MARKETING FORCES (2)?

The marketing department of Commodore must be extremely clever (and the Amiga buyer very stupid) or they could end up with a lot of egg on their faces and a whole lot of hardware left in storage. How can they expect to sell the A570 CD-ROM in appreciable numbers before Christmas after just robbing the original A600 buyers of £100 within a couple of months of it's release by dropping the price?

After waiting nearly a year for the A570 to hit the market, I for one will now be waiting until after Christmas before waiting for a price cut. Commodore proved with the A600 price cut that they will rip us off given half a chance. These are not the moans of an early A600 buyer but of one of last year's A500+ owners.

PS: There should be more CD software (or is it hardware?) available after Christmas.

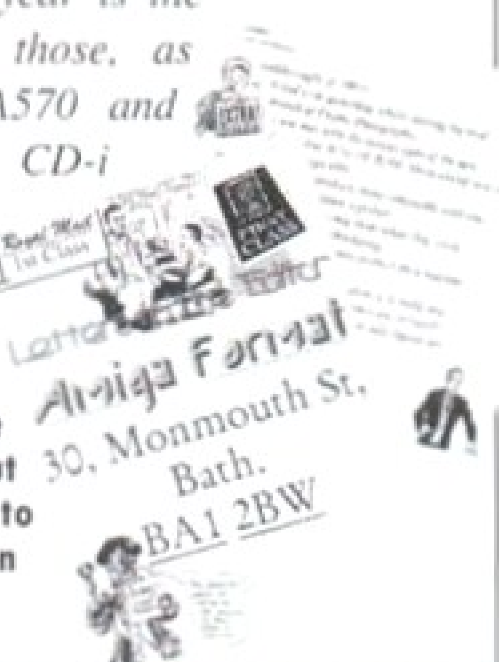
Mark A Davies, Thornton-Cleveleys

Far be it from this humble journal to come to the defence of a multi-national corporation such as Commodore Business Machines which, to be frank, has made a few cock-ups in its glorious history. But it does appear that the anger and bemusement being expressed by at least one of these letters is more than a little misplaced.

Consider, if you will, what the outcry would have been from the million-Plus A500 and Plus users had Commodore not put the long-awaited A570 CD-ROM drive on sale in Dixons Photographic (I assume you mean the one in Alfreton) or, more catastrophically Dixons er… Dixons? Just because the A600 is on sale and the A500 is no longer with us in a retail sense, does not mean that owners of the great old machine don't want to upgrade to make use of CD-ROM. And, as a side issue, Dixons also make the decision what to stock as well as how to stock it.

The second letter does pose a few more problems if, as Mark says, he (and we would assume many other people) will be waiting until after Christmas for a price drop. It does suggest that Commodore are losing ground on the reputation that the Amiga has helped to make for them. The £100 drop in the price of the A600 caught us all off balance – although I can't agree that it as a rip-off, it smacks far more of cock-up and a misreading of the popularity of the machine than of conspiracy. And it certainly is not robbery. What it is, is sad on two counts. Firstly, because Commodore are trying to show an open face to the rest of the world after a long, long time; secondly because people seem to be mis-reading this as two-facedness.

As for the CDs (software), as far as I know, next year is the big one for those, as CDTV, the A570 and A690, and CD-i start fighting in anger.



Mr Turner of Ripley – a little off the mark but he knows how to use DTP with an Amiga.



'Saab' – Martin Revell



Next month – buy buy!

AMIGA FORMAT 41, DECEMBER 1992

DO NOT FORGET! Get down the shops for your copy on Thursday November 12th, or you could miss it!



ONE VERY SPECIAL ISSUE FOR EVERYONE WITH PRESSIES IN MIND

We don't dare say its name yet, but let's face it – THAT time of year is just around the corner. Yes, that time when we all eat far too much, watch appalling television for about twenty-three hours of the day and – yes! – we get pressies! Lots of luvverly pressies!

Which means, for all us Amiga fans, just one thing. It means bonanza time for our Amigas. It means spanking new hardware, more power to our elbows, new areas of software to be explored, and lots of great new games to play. Let me at it!

But wait! There's one problem! What to put on our lists? What to ask for from over-generous aunts and uncles, mums and dads, mates and pals? What to buy for Amiga-obsessed friends and relations? It will be too late before you know it!

Well, in a seasonal spirit of utter greed and self-interest, the December issue of ***Amiga Format*** will answer all the questions about what to buy pr what to ask for for a present this… errm… 'holiday season'. And you'll be able to get your mitts on this essential guide on November 12th… just in time!

BUYING POWER

A full run-down of the ideal set-ups and the best hardware money can obtain – especially if it's not your money! Plus, for prospective Amiga owners, a beginner's guide to the models, the packs and the option available.

SOFT OPTIONS

If you had £200 to kit your Amiga out with software, what would you get? And if you had £1,000? We explain the exciting software options to suit all pockets.

GAME OF THE YEAR – THE CONTENDERS

Whic are the games that are competing for the coveted Christmas Number One position? Which of the new Autumn releases will be worth buying? Are this year's games the best ever crop for the Amiga? All this and more…

ANOTHER COMPLETE COVERDISK PACKAGE

As ever, we don't yet have final confirmation of what it's going to be, but we're working away to get another useful and interesting program for you, and it could be worth anything between £30 and £150. What other magazine gives you more?

PLUS MUCH MORE…

Stocking fillers and pocket-money pressies – lots of little gadgets to fill that corner or stretch your limited pockets. We'll also be taking a look at classic games that you can buy for as little as £2 or £3. And win, win, win as we give away four amazing Miracle piano-teaching systems from Mindscape. Yet this is just the start!

Note: contents list is subject to change at last minute

WordPerfect scroll the text just that much faster? No, it's because games are being made that take advantage of such speed. *Falcon 3.0, Ultima UnderWorld* and *Wing Commander II* are currently responsible for probably 50% (conservative) of the sales of fast IBMs.

I guarantee, that if a spectacular Amiga flight sim (British, of course) with an option for realistic terrain (possibly Gourad fractal polygons) came out, the fantastic screen shots in ***Amiga Format*** of planes flying through valleys combined with a UK mail-order house that won't overcharge on those GVPs would increase the installed base of accelerators tenfold.

David Leonardo, USA

You're quite right about the 68020 – though a lot of speculation has suggested that a more powerful low-end Amiga could use this chip, I'm inclined to agree that it is effectively a dead chip when the power-price ratio of the other chips in the range is considered.

And for the rest of your argument, I believe we're on precisely the same wavelength although we did put the argument the other way around. However, I don't believe the argument is any longer about the purchase of accelerator cards for Amigas that already exist. The question is, what sort of power will the new range of Amiga provide and how will games programmers take advantage of it?

Indeed, we can expect some pretty exciting games. Texture-mapped and Gourad-shaded 3D is an inevitable development, which is going to make the games of the very near future pretty exciting. If you don't know what we're talking about, dear reader, just imagine a flight sim where the ground is detailed pictures of fields rather than just a big, green block and you get some of the idea.

The only danger, for those who crave the enormous potential for beauty and realism of such games, is that processing power is not going to become as cheap as quickly as storage space, with the advent of CD. This means that frame after frame of animation is far more likely to provide the 'new standard' of graphics for 1993 than is real-time calculation. Just wait and see if I'm not right.

In the long term, though, it's more economical for software houses to develop real-time stuff than it is for CD animated games, because they don't have to spend years drawing all the graphics.

HAPPIER

My spirits rose when I read, with interest, the interview with new Commodore UK boss, Kelly Sumner, in the pages of ***Amiga Format***, and sister magazine *Amiga Shopper*. I have owned an Amiga 500 for almost two years (previously our household has owned other Commodore machines dating as far back as the PET) and I was losing faith in Commodore because of their constant operating system changes over the past few months. I was even seriously considering switching from my Amiga to a PC system (horror of horrors!) as I considered it to be more "future-proof", until I realised how much I was over-reacting to the situation.

I would like to congratulate Commodore on the reported £100 price drop of the A600, and I am sure that sales of the machine will continue to accelerate thanks to this move. But mostly, I look forward to the introduction of these mysterious new machines and hope that they can keep the Amiga firmly at the top of the home computer heap for a long time to come!

Daniel Spreadbury, Bournemouth.

Ending on an optimistic note: just wait and see how bright the Amiga's future will be soon!

THE GREAT DEBATE THIS MAGAZINE!

And here, once again, is the bit where we take a look at a subject that's been exercising the minds of many letter-writers this month. And, bizarrely enough, this month's most popular topic with al you scribes is ***Amiga Format*** itself…

Since I bought my first issue of ***Amiga Format*** (Issue 36), I've been hooked. Each month I travel 24 miles into Northern Ireland to get my monthly fix.

Your Coverdisks are unrivalled, your hardware reviews excellent and your verdicts on products are always spot on. But I would like to make a few pointers. According to your survey results, only 27% of readers like your game reviews. I also feel that your game reviews are some what lacking. Your reviews seem to be shallow. Perhaps you could pinch a couple of reviewers from *Amiga Power*?

By the way, when I do raise the cash, should I buy an A500+ or an A600?

Shane Wilson, Co. Donegal

On your first point, this sounds like an excellent reason to subscribe – even if you save money by hitch-hiking to the shops, you'll still be wasting valuable time that subscribing could save you. Turn to Page 223 to find out what a good idea it is.

The figure from our survey is actually that 23% of people want **more** *game reviews. And, owing to the weird way we did the survey, that's even after taking away from that figure all the people who wanted less game reviews.*

As for shallow – well, we don't often do game reviews that stretch for pages, like the games-only magazines do. But if we did, think of all the other interesting stuff you would miss out on. And, of curse, you can say just as much about a game in two paragraphs as in three pages, if you're good.

Now, whether to buy a Plus or an A600? That question will shortly be answered for you, because there will be no Pluses left to buy in the very near future. But more importantly than that, the A600 is just as good a machine as the Plus, no matter what the odd, lone voice might say, and in the PCMCIA 'credit card' expansion slot it has the key to the future of expandable computing.

As a regular reader of both ***Amiga Format*** and *Amiga Power*, could I suggest a re-think on your editorial policy.

In my opinion, you are trying to cover too wide a spectrum of interest in the magazine. I am sure a section of your readers purchase the magazine only for the games element and a further proportion only for the 'serious' content.

Consequently, half of your contents are of no interest to your readership at any one time.

Would it not be possible to make one of your publications 'games' and one 'serious' in order to avoid this problem?

I would be interested in other readers' opinions.

Tony Howarth, Sale, Cheshire.

One argument is that this mag sells three times as many copies as any Amiga games mag and is more popular than any other Amiga mag in the world, and we've always believed that this is because we strike the best balance between serious and games stuff.

But, more importantly, we just don't believe anyone is just interested in one area of the Amiga. Just because the main reason you bought the Amiga is games, that doesn't mean you won't want to try your hand at graphics or use it for word processing.

Upon receiving my two binders with which to put some of my ***Amiga Formats*** in, I proceeded to insert the magazines into the binder.

An hour later I had all the copies I could into the binders but for some strange reason I had two metal spokes left over. Surely since ***AF*** has increased in size over the years, the binders should also? Or is it some ploy to make everyone buy more binders than is necessary? I think we should be told.

Looking back through the issues, one thing that interested me was the Cyberpunk feature you did ages back. How about doing more features on things not strictly computer-based, but of interest to hi-tech people. Like books and videos, and Claudia Schiffer (schwing!)

Finally, what are those two blokes doing in the subscription page to that women?

Tat Sing Kong, Neath, West Glamorgan

Errm… to be honest, I've never actually tried putting 12 issues in a binder, but we did expand them about a year ago because the magazine was getting fatter all the time.

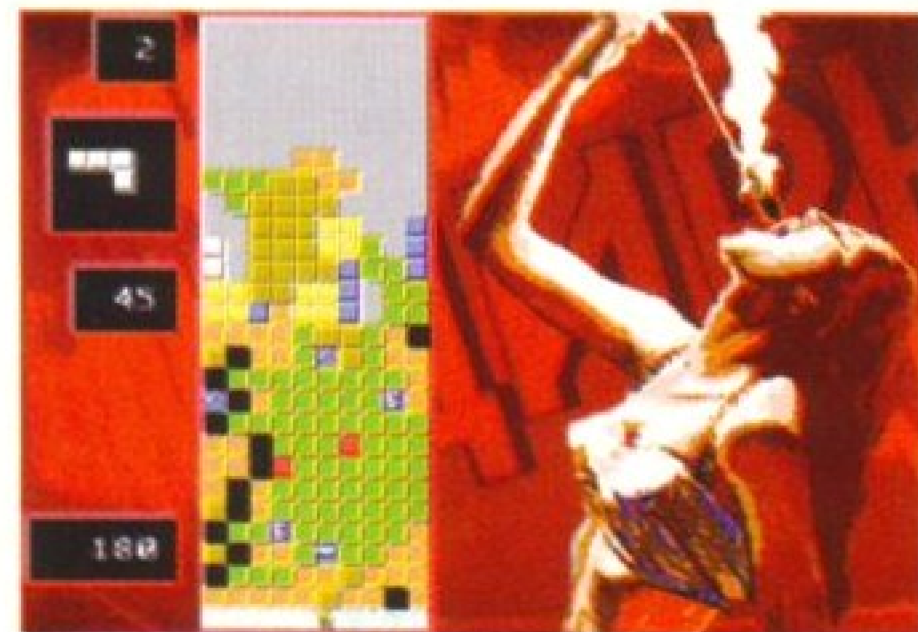
But to my mind the most interesting thing in your letter is the bit about features. We've always felt that for the most part, an Amiga magazine should only have Amiga-related stuff in it. We still stand by that general brief, but we might try a few 'off the beam' ideas soon. Any suggestions?

Spot the shot 40



Simply identify the game that this small portion of a screenshot is from, write the answer on a postcard with your name and address and send it in to us.

The address is Spot the Shot 40, ***Amiga Format***, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. The first correct entry out of the hat every month will win a fabulous ***Amiga Format*** T-shirt!

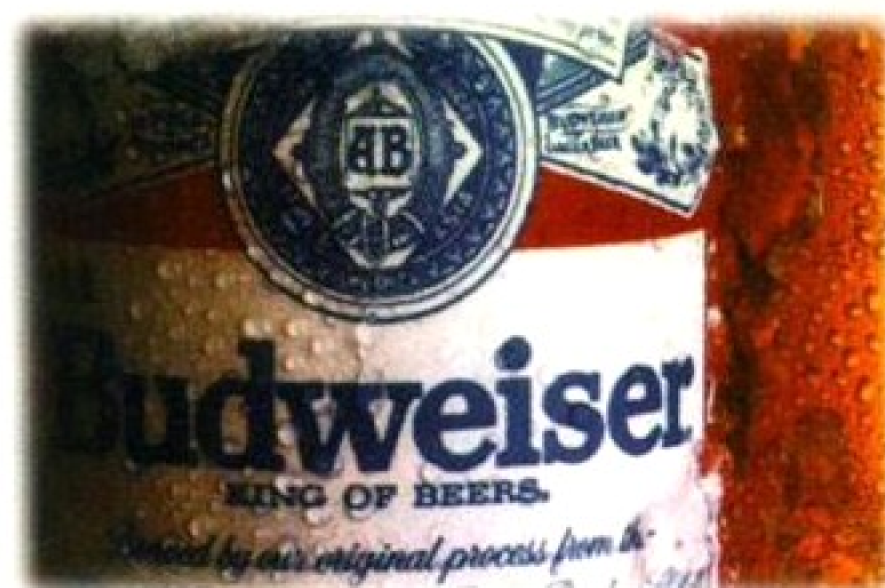


The winner of the Spot the Shot competition from Issue 38 of Amiga Format is Connor Maxwell of Dundee, who correctly identified a portion of this very same picture from *Super Tetris* and wins a T shirt.

Apparently the Polish government is considering asking people to pay in order to visit the Auschwitz death camp. Just think about that. Pay-to-get-IN! There is one thing to have a memorial but another to create a freak show – financially self-supporting or not.

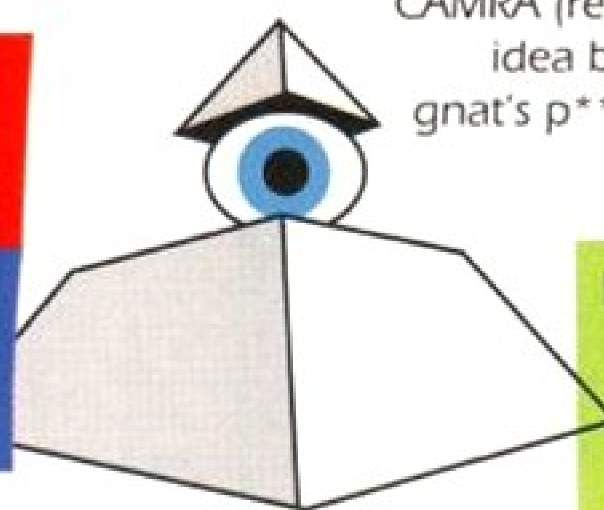
Bloody drug addicts, they just do it deliberately. Well, you tell that to a bunch of monkeys in Ghazipur, eastern India. These poor critters are now heroin addicted after drinking water from the river Ganges that was polluted by a factory making the toxic and illegal drug.

Okay, so it's the worst joke of the month, and we won't even bother supplying the punchline, but the feedline goes something like this… Q: Who scored more times than anyone else in a Chelsea shirt?



Budweiser, now there's a beer to conjure with. Or rather, there's two beers to conjure with. With the countries of what used to be the Eastern Bloc greeting capitalism with open wallets, the argument has sprung up about whether the Czech company who thought up the name, or the giant American company (Anheuser Busch) that uses it as well will merge. It seems that the huge US concern would like this option. According to a taster for CAMRA (reported in The Independent) this would not be a good idea because: "It's simple, one tastes like beer, the other like gnat's p***." For reasons of not wanting to get sued, we won't say which one we think he or she means.

Actual Reality

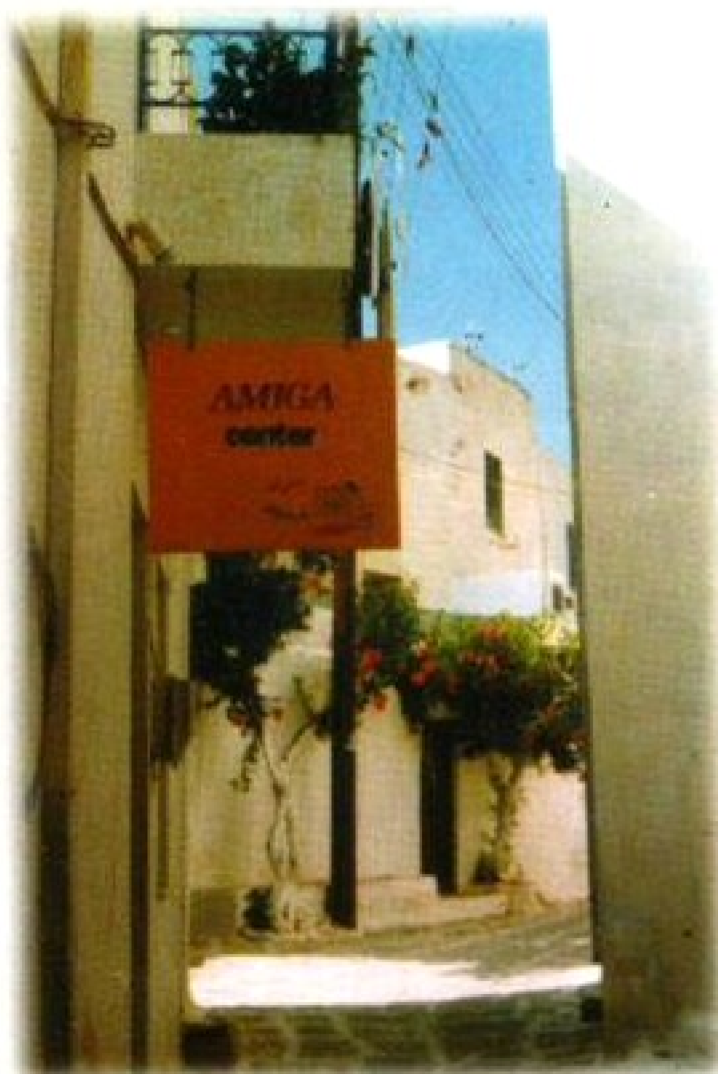


Ahhh! Panic. Reality toughens up as we head inexorably towards the horror-comedy of the US elections(in which we still don't get a vote). Fact becomes fiction, and fictions become saleble. Once again the world surrounding the Amiga envelopes us all in strangeness and little charm

Football fun (there is still some left). Bottom of the table West Ham playing Manchester City last year. The City fans screamed: "Going down! Going Down! Going Down!". The Hammer's fans responded: "So are we! So are we! So are we!". And West Ham aren't noted for being quick!

A company called Genuflex is responsible for making new, air conditioned cushioned and microphoned confessional booths for the Catholic church in Italy. Mea culpa!

And you thought it was all ad lib… *AF* recently came across a fascinating publication called *Broadcasters* (sic) *Q Sheet*. Written with all those sound-a-like local radio DJ's in mind, the mag' is full of rivetting gobbets of trivia like: On this day in 1930 the two halves of the Sydney Harbour Bridge were joined, and in 1971 a black and white TV licence would have cost you £6, whilst a colour one would set you back a whole £11. Pages and pages of the same inane drivel that makes you want to take the microphone and ram it right up your local DJ's… (*that's enough DJ'ing inanity ed*).



Worldwide, that's the Amiga family. Buried deep in the historically very significant (as Frank would probably say: "Democradacious, Platomungous, Socratastic mate) nation of Greece – well Paros to be exact – is this Amiga Centre. 'Top Games!' says the sign, 'Free Software' it continues. Looks hot, sounds free, we love it! In fact we bet that the famously fun-loving Greek government use this emporium all the time for their Amiga needs (well it beats playing Elgin Marbles)

Thanks to Amanda of *Today's Vegetarian* for sending in the piccie.

The financial world is in safe hands, at least in Sweden where the Finance Minister is called Ann Wibble.

Hi-tech warfare corner… although president-to-be Bill (not a Kennedy clone at all) Clinton missed going to Vietnam (shame!) he still knows the value of a good war. Recently he stated that we had all seen Patriot missiles "…going through doors and down chimneys". Whoops! Vice president (and not a silly little man at all) Danforth Quayle leapt to the fore with a correction for Bill: "Bill Clinton didn't know the difference between the Patriot and the Cruise missile." Whoops on you this time Dan (who, by the way, was the deputy Chief Commanding Officer of absolutely everything during the Gulf War/Crisis/Conflict, and so should know better) the house-calling missile they were both referring to was of the laser-guided variety. God knows what Dan and Bill would have done to the Vietnamese… now was it the North Vietnamese who were the good guys or was it the South?

Amiga Format Issue 40

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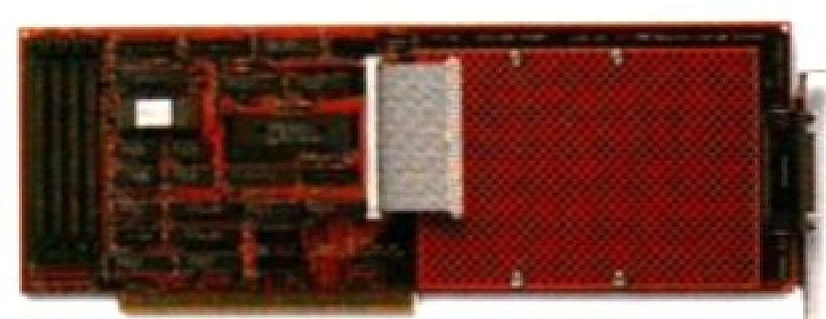
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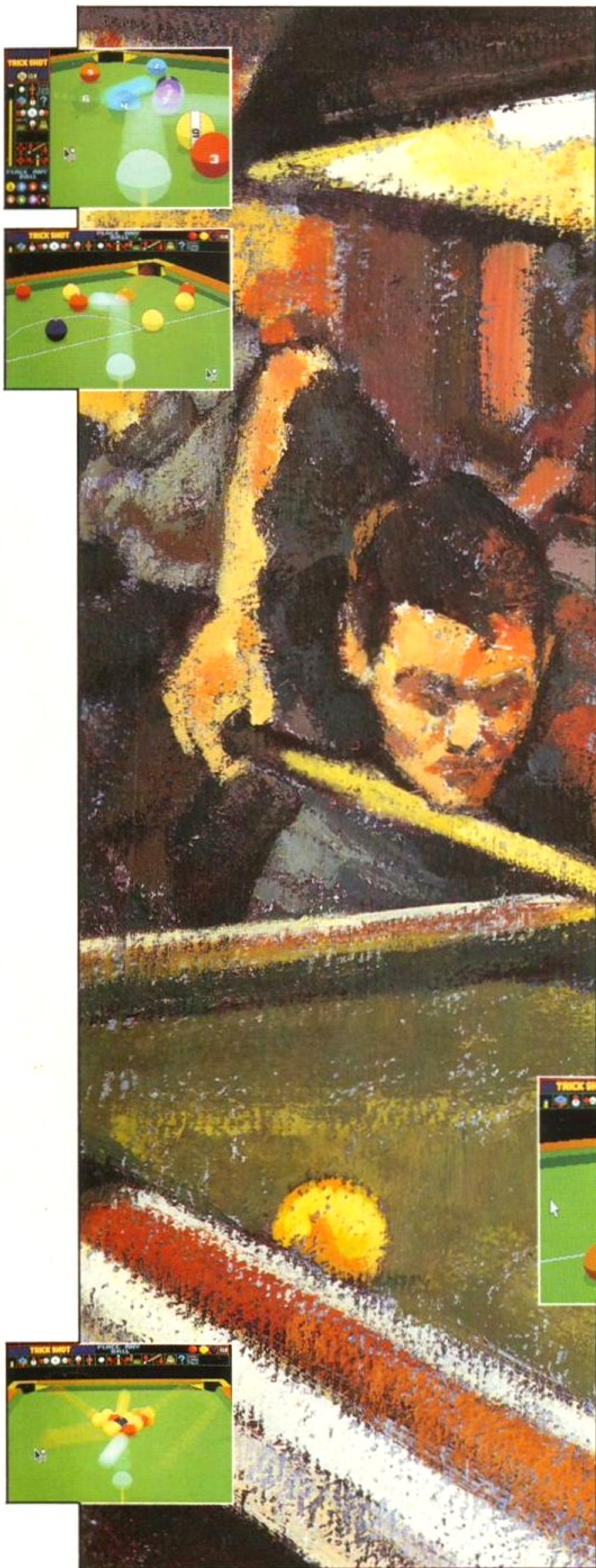
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